

FIFTY YEARS ON

The TLS of February 1, 1936, carried a leading article by Edward Thompson on the poetry of "New" India, from which the following extracts are taken:

Indian vernacular literatures look back upon a century of continually increasing activity, which began with the impact of English thought and education. India's rulers needed a staff of bilingual subordinates, and knowledge of English became the road to employment and possession of the West's secret of superior strength. Our difficult and wayward language has been mastered by Indians on a scale of achievement to which the world can show no parallel. Nevertheless, this achievement exacted its price. . . . English literature, recommended by political and economic considerations, was often accepted rather than absorbed, and its influence rarely went to the centre, where imagination is touched and awakened. . . . That the new education fore-

shadowed in Macaulay's famous Minute, almost exactly a century ago, was not altogether helpful to creative artists, Indians themselves recognize. The necessity of receiving almost all instruction through a medium which every moment demanded attention to itself has laid heavy burdens on the mind. It is not strange that mathematics has been the subject in which Indian scholars have found it easiest to win unquestioned reputation outside India, for in this study the strain imposed by an English medium has been lightest. Yet today, taking stock after a century of Indian literature influenced by English literature, the foreigner finds himself compelled to astonished admiration that so often, and in so many writers, creative imagination has overcome its disabilities, and has taken into Indian literature not merely the formal but the essential. English literature has been read in deplorable anthologies. The selection of set books has often been unfortunate. Commentaries have been bewil-

deringly dark. . . . Yet genius has repeatedly escaped the schools or neutralized their influence.

The first great poet of modern India, Michael Madhusudan Datta, is an example. His mind seized all it needed of English scholarship, which was ample enough to enable him to write a harmless imitation of Scott in English verse, "The Captive Lady". Then, wisely turning to his own vernacular, he naturalized in Bengali the sonnet and blank verse. . . . He seems to have been the first to perceive that Bengali was weak in what makes rhythm in Western languages. It was (like Indian music) essentially melodic, apt to make its appeal by a broken and separate music, rather than by deeper tones threaded into one pervading tone. . . .

[In] Rabindranath Tagore. . . we span the generations between the beginning of modern Indian literature and what that literature is doing today. There is, fortunately, no need to

assess his achievement yet. One or two, however, need saying. The first is, that he has ever more closely followed the life of his own time with more quick and catholic an interest; the second is, his ease and mastery must surely be in the unique. It is no wonder that he continues to overshadow Bengali literature. . . . marks the definite passing of Indian literary criticism into the modern world. Under editorship of [Suddhindranath] Datta, a clear and vigorous prose-writer, it has set ahead of anything else in Indian period literature, in catholicity, range, intelligence and freedom from prejudice. The current number finds space for a long discussion of Tagore and for articles on the Chinese Renaissance and Hindu minor philosophical texts; a detailed notice of such English poets as Deryush, Mr. Hugh McDermid and Mr. M. Trevelyan, and a close examination of "Rock" and "Murder in the Cathedral".

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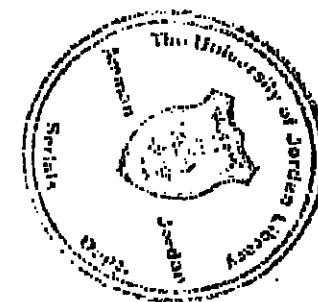
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TLS



The Times Literary Supplement

FRIDAY 7 FEBRUARY 1986 No 4,323 80p

John North on Halley's comet and its literature

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Wilfrid Mellers on Charles Ives



The Times Literary Supplement

February 7 1986 Priory House, St John's Lane, London EC1M 4BX

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One of Julian Trevelyan's most recent paintings, "Honfleur" (1985) is on show at Watlington's Art Centre, 40 High Street, Brentford, Middlesex, in the exhibition, *Julian Trevelyan: A first retrospective* until February 25.

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A timely catalyst

John North

BRIAN HARPUR
The Official Halley's Comet Book
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ANDREA CARUSI AND GIOVANNI B. VALSECCHI (Editors)
Dynamics of Comets: Their origin and evolution
 439pp. Dordrecht: Reidel. Hf165

FRED L. WHIPPLE
The Mystery of Comets
 216pp. Cambridge University Press. £12.95.

ALBERT VAN HELDEN
Measuring the Universe: Cosmic dimensions from Aristarchus to Halley
 203pp. University of Chicago Press. £31.50.

JACK MEADOWS
Space Garbage: Comets, meteors and other solar-system debris
 160pp. George Philip. £7.95.

BRUCE MORTON (Editor)
Halley's Comet, 1755-1984: A bibliography
 280pp. Greenwood Press. £43.50.

ROBERTA EITER AND STUART SCHNEIDER
Halley's Comet: Memories of 1910
 96pp. Pandemic. £14.95.

H. G. WELLS
In the Days of the Comet
 28pp. Hogarth. £3.95.

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than two millennia. What must surely be counted as the most fortunate discovery of recent years in this connection are Babylonian cuneiform tablets, at present on exhibition in the British Museum. As told in an "exclusive" in Brian Harpur's *Official Halley's Comet Book*, a gap in the records was filled when Richard Stephenson of Durham asked Hermann Hunger of Vienna whether he knew of Babylonian observations comparable with the Chinese. Hunger searched the papers of the late Abe Sachs, and found records for the appearance of Halley's comet in 164 BC in no fewer than three different tablets. To Harpur, the discovery of the vital link within a mile or so of where Halley was born "seems to stretch the arm of coincidence out of its socket". His love of coincidence encourages him to draw up a series of significant episodes in world history that have coincided - give or take a few years - with the comet's return. It ends with the birth of Richard Nixon in 1913, only three years after the 1910 return. There, presumably, goes the other arm.

The comet's first appearance after Halley's prediction was indeed in 1759. Its return was a prime test, not only of the original prediction, but of a more elaborate mathematical analysis that had been offered by A. C. Clairaut a year or so before. At last, the comet had really come into its own as a phenomenon of scientific concern. Since then, it has been back three times: in 1835, in 1910, and now. On each return, the scientific world has risen to the occasion. One can have an International Year of the Squirrel at the drop of a hat, but it makes sense to concentrate the mind on an important comet when it is in the neighbourhood. No profession has a stronger urge than the astronomical to confer at precisely chosen intervals, and cometary visitations make a change from centuries. In fact one of the endearing things about Halley's comet is that it returns roughly once in a lifetime. Mark Twain noted that he had arrived with the 1835 apparition. With his inimitable sense of timing, he left with that of 1910.

The proceedings of a Rome conference, *Dynamics of Comets*, edited by Andrea Carusi and Giovanni B. Valsecchi, give a comprehensive account of the present state of knowledge as to cometary origins, meteor streams, gravitational and other forces that determine their motions. They give, too, something that astronomers in 1910 could leave to the imagination of such as H. G. Wells - an idea of the planning

of the several space missions aimed at comet Halley. A fuller and more recent account of them, very well illustrated, will be found in Fred L. Whipple's *The Mystery of Comets*.

The orbits of comets around the Sun are a small but important part in Albert van Helden's well-written general history of changing ideas on cosmic dimensions, *Measuring the Universe*. Although he ends his account with Halley, he points out that there were people alive in 1700 who had first learned all that they knew on this score from the Ptolemaic scheme. Halley's contemporaries had learned that the distance from Earth to Sun was greater than Ptolemy had thought, by a factor of about sixteen, and distances within the solar system were tolerably well known by the time he announced that the path for the comet of 1682 had amounted to forty times the distance the old astronomers had assigned to the fixed stars, and four times the distance even then assigned to Saturn at its furthest.

Comets are still known to us because they orbit the Sun, but they come in from distances far greater than Halley ever dreamed, and from all directions. These facts suggested to the Dutch astronomer Jan Oort the existence of a vast cloud of comets, with perhaps as many in it as there are stars in our Galaxy. (Nearly a hundred named examples are separately discussed in *Dynamics of Comets*, and as though to show that astronomers on the whole disapprove of stars Hollywood-style, Encke's comet is mentioned as often as Halley's.) Since our Sun, however, has passed a number of times round the Galaxy, with its own considerably larger giant clouds of gas and dust, would such an "Oort cloud" not have been stripped away, had it ever existed? Do comets in fact come from the nebula out of which the Sun was formed, or are they drawn from that vast reservoir, the supposedly cometary cloud, extending at a distance of the nearest stars? The Rome conference proceedings show that there is plenty of room for lively controversy on these points.

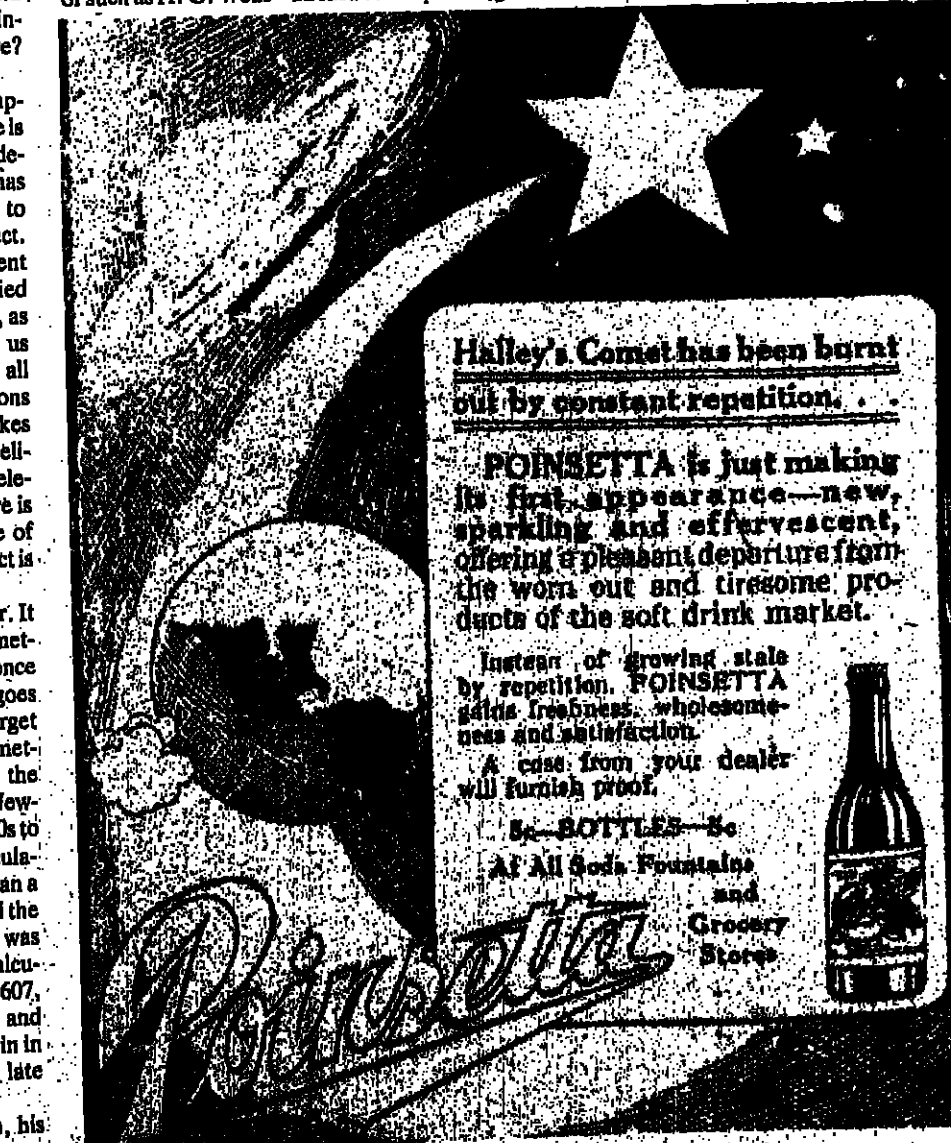
Two very clear and concise elementary introductions to such matters will be found in both Whipple's and the equally aptly-illustrated book by Jack Meadows. Meadows does not take his title, *Space Garbage*, from the book trade: it refers rather to the meteorites, asteroids, comets, meteors and interplanetary dust that remained after the planets and their satellites were formed. He likens himself to an

archaeologist, sifting through rubbish to piece together the early history of the solar system and beyond. By contrast, most of the popular books brought into being by the comet in the last year or two have been rag-bags of information, compounded rather than sifted - a snippet of two of Halley biography, a few scraps of social history, which is to say the odd newspaper-cutting and a picture postcard or two, a smidgen of science, and information on the Giotto mission, courtesy of the Dynamics Group, British Aerospace. If *The Official Halley's Comet Book* falls into this category, it scores over much of the opposition simply because it has been compiled with enormous zest. It must have been written as the presses were turning. Harpur registered Halley's Comet Limited as long ago as 1975, with charitable intent. His evident love for the comet is such that he would bottle and sell it if he could.

What seems to me the best of the new books for the general reader, however, is Whipple's *The Mystery of Comets*, written with the help of Daniel Green. Whipple is a retired Harvard Professor of Astronomy whose qualifications include the discovery of no fewer than six comets in twelve years. For some peculiar reason, perhaps out of deference to Halley, his publisher has refrained from mentioning that fact on the dust-jacket. The book includes a dash of history (apart from what now seems to be a permanent feature of Cambridge University Press books, namely a comprehensive history of the Press on the title-page). Not the least interesting bit is Whipple's sketch of how he arrived at his own highly influential account of the origin and nature of comets, based on the so-called "dirty-snowball" theory. Among the various phenomena he managed to explain on the basis of his model was the way comets seem reluctant to conform with Newton's law of gravity. The reason, he found, is that the "snowball" at the head of the comet, when in sunlight, blows off gas on the side towards the Sun, and acts as a sort of jet engine. A. D. Dubiago in the Soviet Union had been trying out similar ideas when he put forward his theory. It is a curious fact that that was all in the late 1940s, the Golden Age of the jet engine.

Like Halley's comet itself, the books it has spawned in such numbers convey - at least to the historian - a distinct sense of *déjà vu*. Not in every respect, of course. No theatre producer in 1910 had an audience so captive, if not captivated, as the television audience in 1986. For more than a year it has been possible to buy cometary graphics for your home computer (there are at least three programs on the market), another privilege unknown in 1910. There must surely have been comet pop-up books then. They are happily still around, and although they do not exhale the Spirit of the Age, are likely to be less frustrating than things that do. Time will tell, but it is doubtful whether the comet's social impact in 1986 will quite compare with that of 1910. As readers of Bruce Morton's annotated bibliography, *Halley's Comet 1755-1984* will be able to discover, more than 800 published items - varying from newspaper articles to weighty monographs - appeared on the theme between 1905 and 1914. Since his book is more or less restricted to the English language, and has a heavy American bias, that number clearly represents only the tip of the iceberg. While the United States in 1910 seems to have been second to none in the way of alarmism - Comet Cocktail and Cyanogen Flip were at the other extreme of social response - one has to turn perhaps to France for the comet's most stylish literary and artistic reception, and to Germany for works of the deadliest seriousness. The whole subject will sooner or later be discovered for what it is, an unlimited source of post-deconstructivist literary theses.

The trade in artefacts has far to go before catching up with that of 1910. Has the cutting of cometary diamonds yet begun? In Haiti in 1910 one could buy voodoo comet pills - one to be taken each hour, until such time as the comet began to recede from the Earth. In New York in the same year, dealers in telescopes sold more in three months than they had until then since the Civil War. Come March, will the Japanese optical industry crack up under the strain? At a humbler level, the postcard, alas, is not what it was, as we are reminded by Roberta Eiter and Stuart Schneider's lavishly illustrated *Halley's Comet: Memories of*



Taken from Halley's Comet Memories of 1910, reviewed here

Working culture

Stuart Woolf

VITTORIO FOA
La Gerusalemme rimandata: Domande di oggi
infranti agli inglesi del primo novecento
334pp. Turin: Rosenberg & Sellier. L30,000.

The peculiarities of English society, and their historical origins, have long attracted the attention of foreign intellectuals. In particular such scholars from the Continent – or “Europe” as the English persist in calling it – as Elie Halévy, Karl Polanyi or Nikolaus Pevsner have made seminal contributions, perhaps because geographical closeness heightened their sense of the difference of their own intellectual formation and hence their ability to view English society through a different lens. Vittorio Foa's study of the first two decades of twentieth-century Britain inevitably arouses such reflections because of its sharpness of observation, originality and idiosyncrasy.

An active anti-fascist, imprisoned by the régime in 1935, Foa spent his entire career after the war as a trade unionist, one of the leaders of the most powerful of the three Italian confederations, the communist-socialist CGIL. Unlike almost any British (or indeed other Italian) trade unionist, he has retained the wide-ranging curiosity and passion for research of a committed intellectual and since his retirement at the age of sixty in 1970 has dedicated much of his energies to an exploration of the history of the British labour movement. Unduly modest, Foa disclaims to have written a history book; but his “questions of today to Englishmen of the early twentieth century” in fact exemplify what all historians practise: an interpretation of the past derived from the preoccupations and assumptions of the present. What is more open to question is whether the intensity of Foa's experiences and preoccupations as a trade unionist and socialist may not have weighted his analysis disproportionately.

For Foa (as for most foreign and some indigenous socialists), “English society seems animated more than any other by class antagonism and less than any other by socialism, at least in its continental meaning as a profound transformation of the social system”. The explanation of this contribution he finds, on the one hand, in the particular pattern of evolution of the British working class and its institutional forms of representation during the nineteenth century; and, on the other hand, in the capacity of the ruling class to confront and absorb recurrent pressures for radical change spontaneously generated from below within the working-class movement. The result was the definitive defeat in the years 1915–21 of the most serious challenge to capitalism: the syndicalist shop stewards' movement. At the centre of Foa's interpretation is a concept of working-class culture which builds on the well-established History Workshop tradition of E. P. Thompson, Raphael Samuel and Gareth Stedman Jones, which he enriches in an original manner from his personal trade union experiences and reflections.

Two aspects of Foa's understanding of working-class culture merit attention. First, he stresses the non-uniformity of the labour movement as a class, which is internally differentiated through the process of capitalist development, but also historically and hence geographically anchored; with the consequence that it expressed itself in a multiplicity of forms and levels. Foa attacks the simplified Marxist view, which ascribes a growing uniformity to the labour movement from the inevitable process of class struggle, in which artisan labour is substituted by a class-conscious proletariat. His own approach is more sophisticated: he argues that the composite and complex sources of working-class culture, in home and neighbourhood as much as in the work-place, can explain the sometimes negative practical consequences of union leaders' decisions, which are based exclusively on a view of the worker in the factory. Foa's discussion of that hoary question of British labour historiography – working-class patriotism in 1914 – dismisses ideological analyses of socialist ideas and parties in favour of an illuminating and refreshing cultural interpretation of a “plurality of consciousness” that permitted the individual worker both to support a general policy (of the

just war) and to defend his rights in a concrete situation, e.g. to resist wartime productivity measures.

If working-class culture in general needs to be seen as a complex, fragmented and contradictory cluster of attitudes, more impermeable to than receptive of middle-class culture, then Foa argues that the culture of work acts as a unifying agent. Here his analysis benefits from his intimate knowledge of the labour process in an advanced industrial society, and is also coloured by his faith in the labour movement. He illustrates expertly the nature and mechanisms of friction and conflict in the different industrial sectors in early twentieth-century Britain. Control of the labour process he sees not only as the major theme of social conflict in the Edwardian and war years, but ultimately as the almost transcendental key to the history of human labour: as an inherent resistance to the capitalist, externally imposed organization and ideology of labour. But Foa's definition of this control is concerned less with the Marxist reappropriation of the means of production than with technical control of the tempo and pace of production. In this sense, the factory system or Taylorism, like automation today, are merely different moments of a uniform, long-term capitalist assault on the worker's independence and the very fact of this constant pressure being exerted on practices that encapsulate core elements of the worker's culture, explains the inevitability and irrepressibility of conflict. For Foa, daily resistance at the work-place, in defence of an independent “space” and self-management, accumulated slowly and deeply until it expressed itself in the form of collective struggles. And despite repeated defeats, such resistance will continue, adapting and inventing new methods to meet the changed situation: “there is an informal organisation of labour which escapes management decisions, as there is an informal organisation of life which escapes every government”.

In this context Foa analyses the social history of Britain between 1910 and 1921. Some of what he has to say will not be new to English

readers, but the coherence of his interpretative scheme will provoke positive reflections, not least because it bears so characteristically Continental an imprint. The outbreak of social tensions after 1910 is used as a case-history of the symbiotic relationship that forms between mature capitalist development and class conflict as the workers grow aware and intolerant of inequality. If the distribution of wealth and the accumulation of profits aroused resentment in Edwardian England, mass primary education in turn increased the conflict because of the inability of capitalist society to offer outlets appropriate to the level and expectations of the newly instructed. The Liberal reforms, understood as a response equally to falling productivity and to the imperialist concern for a healthy race, are also interpreted as both the consequence of working-class pressure and as an attempt at social control. But the reforms, by their very enactment, increased the workers' consciousness of their own rights and hence accentuated conflict. The industrial unrest of 1910–14 was the result of pressure from below: the exercise through strikes of the class consciousness of the unskilled before that of the skilled, which union and party leaders proved unable to direct. The primary actors are the shop stewards, whose identification with and organization of labour resistance represent, for Foa, the one affirmation by an autonomous labour movement of a genuinely revolutionary attempt at social change through workers' control. He is at his best in analysing the elements of revolutionary syndicalist ideology present in the shop stewards' committee and he insists on their role as the link between industrial action and the political struggle, and discusses the reasons for the failure of the movement and its aftermath between 1917 and 1921.

The major cause of defeat he identifies as the remarkable ability of the government, forced by war first to intervene in and then to modernize industry, to measure up to the workers' challenge, through an able mix of tergiversation, repression and concessions, which gained

the consensus of the labour movement even before the deliberate smashing of resistance in 1920–21. The modern industrial state thus emerges, longer-sighted as well as stronger than the industrial bourgeoisie, with its battery of repressive powers but, more important, its capacity to gain consent, not least through its incorporation of labour leaders as instruments of social stability. There is a certain *déjà vu* in Foa's discussion of this new industrial state: it lacks the sophistication and penetration of his analyses of the varied mechanisms and instruments of industrial action. One misses here the sympathetic understanding with which he treats not only the shop stewards' movement, but even the trade unions, whose ineffectiveness he ascribes to their complexity: the different strata each had their own vision and logic, which did not always coincide with those of their leaders. Even so, Foa uses the emergence of this new state to explain the success within the Labour Party of the Webbs' state capitalism and welfare state as the only realistic alternative, not just to revolutionary socialism but to G. D. H. Cole's industrial socialism or to Tawney's moral version of it.

Foa's study is confined to Britain and to the first two decades of this century. But, as he admits, he sees far broader implications of this struggle for self-expression and industrial self-government. The specificity of the English case is stressed and indeed emerges in the slightly puzzled acknowledgement that for most British workers industrial control had little significance as an instrument of social change. But it is a Britain interpreted through the experiences of a remarkable Italian trade unionist, particularly those of the 1960s which culminated in the “hot autumn” of 1969. But as the great challenge of 1968–9 has receded, leaving for most a bitter taste of disillusionment, failure or helplessness in the current crisis, Foa's analysis is tinged with an almost fatalistic resignation, in which he confesses that the destiny of political and social radicalism seems to remain the subordinate one of soliciting reforms within the existing system.

high road to Wigan Pier and Jarrow, where the staple industries of textiles, coal and shipbuilding were suddenly in steep decline and long-term unemployment enveloped a work-force once proud, independent and skilled. The port transport industry faced no less grave problems but was out of the limelight, until recurrent labour militancy and indiscipline during the 1940s and 50s, and technological innovations – automated cargo-handling and containerization – demanded its drastic reorganization. Eventually, in the late 1960s, the decasualization of port labour was accomplished but already and without this a revolution in the earning power of the docker had been achieved. Once considered (fallaciously) to be the meanest paid of unskilled labourers, dockers after the Second World War rose to be among the highest paid of all workers; and their status now bore all the hallmarks of privilege. They formed an exclusive, almost hereditary caste like a labouring House of Lords, with riparian rights.

This curious story is now the subject of an excellent monograph by Gordon Phillips and Noel Whiteside, which for the first time essays and achieves comprehensiveness. Previous treatments were limited by period or by concentrating on institutional history, of the transport unions especially and of the favoured schemes of public administrators, social statisticians, and labour economists. But there were always at least four parties to the situation: employers, trade unions, rank and file, and public bodies (comprising both official and “expert” elements). None of these parties was homogeneous or consistent; moreover, the issue was never just one of dividing where mutual economic interest best lay and then negotiating the necessary compromises and adjustments. Cultural conditioning and the climate of “casualism”, with its particular social attitudes and working practices, was the source of the most intractable problems because it was here that the deepest loyalties were forged and the most obstinate habits set.

It is in this area that the present authors

make their most signal contribution by throughout they impress by their eye-handled and lucid exposition of the interplay of forces which conspired to frustrate successive efforts to reorganize methods of employment in the docks. Historians of industrial relations, economists, sociologists and civil servants alike should ponder their conclusions concerning popular resistance to industrial rationalization, the nature of craft and work skills, management priorities and union objectives, and government welfare and manpower strategies.

The deliberation with which Phillips and Whiteside weigh the evidence commands the highest respect, and there are few instances where their work might be improved. It is a pity, perhaps, that they fail to cite Jimmy Sexton's characteristically extravagant but not the less serious assertion of the docker's claim to be considered a craftsman. Also they do not seem to have read or used the same author's play, *The Riot Act* (1914), which gives a rare insight into the emotional conflict and unblinking vanity of a trade union official torn between making reasonable agreements with employers, enlarging the authority of his union, and preserving the loyalty of the men.

One final grouse about an otherwise outstanding book. It would be interesting to learn more about the repeatedly referred-to Richard Williams, architect of the Clearing House and labour registration scheme introduced at Liverpool in 1911–12, the single most important experiment in the industry before 1914 and arguably for the next twenty years too. Phillips and Whiteside properly and fully evaluate that experiment but say tantalizingly little about the man. They heavily lump him with William Beveridge, Llewellyn Smith and Humbert Wolfe as one of those “eloquent and self-confident, vigorous and impatient, well-informed and socially blinkered” civil servants who “gave momentum” to the cause of social labour reform and intensified the opposition to it. But Richard Williams, unlike the rest, did not make it to the top in Whitehall and he has no entry in the DNB or even *Who Was Who*.

A particoloured pedigree

Margaret FitzHerbert

BARBARA STRACHEY
The Strachey Line: An English family in
America, India and at home from 1570–1902
192pp. Gallancz. £12.95.
0575 03993 5

Family history usually contains the main ingredients of a good nineteenth-century novel – love, death, betrayal, ambition crowned, ambition thwarted, honour tested, honour wanting, with the bonus that it is a true story and that the participants in the drama are real people. Barbara Strachey is the queen of family historians. Not only is she blessed in her own family, in all its extraordinary ramifications, with first-class raw material, but she is also a talented writer. Her history of the Pearsall Smith family in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century, *Remarkable Relations*, was a model of how to write family history. But *The Strachey Line* will come as a disappointment to her many admirers. These relations are no less remarkable than the Pearsall Smiths but the treatment is perfunctory, the characters too numerous, and the time-span too great. Gone is the wealth of intimate detail and gone, too, is the reader's involvement in the story.

Three-and-a-half centuries and three continents are covered in fourteen compressed chapters with eleven family trees. From among the curious and assorted company one wishes that Miss Strachey had chosen one generation or even two and written about them in depth and at length. Many of the characters are worthy of a complete book to themselves. The first William Strachey was shipwrecked in 1609 in the Caribbean, on his way to Virginia. His description of the shipwreck was used by his friend William Shakespeare in *The Tempest*. This William Strachey was also a friend of the poet Donne. Throughout the centuries the Strachey, even the obscurer ones, had famous friends. They were seldom very nice to these friends and in general were a cold and unattractive clan, though eccentric and interesting.

Much of Miss Strachey's book is taken up with India, where Strachey served as administrators from the days of Clive (to whom Henry, the first baronet, was connected by marriage) until the beginning of this century. They were honest, even brilliant, bureaucrats and served India well. Less worthy but more entertaining was another Anglo-Indian family, the Kirkpatrick, into which the Strachey twice married. James Achilles Kirkpatrick (1764–1806) was the most colourful. He married, after a fashion, a beautiful Indian lady, and adopted many Indian customs. A later Strachey, George (1828–1912), who had a Kirkpatrick mother, also adopted Indian customs. Although he only spent five years in the sub-continent, from the age of nineteen to twenty-four, he insisted for the rest of his life spent in England on sticking to Calcutta time, which he considered the only trustworthy time, breakfasting at tea-time and lunching at midnight. “Breakfast, moreover, he preferred to eat standing, and off the mantelpiece, where it was laid for him, and he liked his eggs cold. He finally took almost entirely to the nocturnal life and was rarely seen.” It is in such brief vignettes of obscure Strachey that the book has charm. One longs for more of these and less of the bureaucratic achievements of the more successful members of the tribe.

The shipwrecked William became Secretary of the Colony of Virginia; and the first Sir Henry helped negotiate the peace treaty after the American War of Independence. Other Strachey travelled in Tibet and Persia and all left interesting accounts of their doings. Barbara Strachey carries the story no further than the Victorian generation, eschewing her Bloomsbury connections, of whom she notes, “many of them have been more than adequately dealt with by others” (not least, it should be added, by herself). Nevertheless, one wishes she had applied the concentration which she earlier lavished on these Bloomsbury Strachey to a longer book about a smaller number of their forebears.

A mystifying magus

Robert Irwin

ALASTAIR HAMILTON
William Bedwell the Arabist 1563–1632
163pp. Leiden: Brill/Leiden University Press.
H646.
9004 0741 1

William Bedwell is perhaps best known as the author of *Mahomet Unmasked. Or A Discovery of the manifold Forgeries, Falsehoods, and Impieties of the Blasphemous Seducer Mahomet. With a demonstration of the Insufficiency of his Law, contained in the cursed Alcoran. Written long since in Arabicke and now done into English*. . . (as the first half of the title runs); yet it cannot be said that he is well known. He had an uneventful life as rector of St Ethelburga, Bishopsgate, and then as vicar of Tottenham High Cross. He intersted himself in Ramist techniques for the presentation of mathematics and toiled to produce *Mesolabium Architectonicum*, a treatise on measuring technique for the use of craftsmen. But his very slight claim for fame rests on his career as an unsuccessful orientalist. Unlike his student Pococke, Bedwell never went out to the Near East and he was even reluctant to seek for manuscripts in foreign libraries. This meant that his knowledge of Arabic was based on very few sources. He compiled an Arabic dictionary which he never succeeded in getting published; the manuscript version was consulted by a few and criticized by some. Thomas Erpenius and Isaac Casaubon had reservations about Bedwell's scholarship and, in general, he was more successful in attracting the friendship of other scholars than their admiration.

It is difficult to be certain about Bedwell's reasons for interesting himself in Arabic, and hard to judge the real driving motive from the conventional justifications that he produced on various occasions. Certainly he knew little about the Arabs and he hated Islam. He touted the claims of Arabic to be a practical

skill, an almost universal language, knowledge of which would serve seamen and merchant venturers well; but Bedwell was also concerned to put Arabic at the service of the Anglican Church. Arabic was the (in fact unreliable) handmaiden of biblical studies to be used in the elucidation and translation of Old Testament Hebrew. Arabic also opened a window on to the world of oriental Christianity. It was vaguely hoped that the Maronites, Jacobites, Nestorians, Copts and others might have preserved a more primitive and purer form of Christianity which might prove to be in providential accord with the beliefs of the seventeenth-century Church of England.

Bedwell's interests and contacts were with movements, such as Arminianism or Ramism, that are not now thought of as having been in the mainstream of European intellectual history. He stands at the obscure centre of an intellectual maze, and every path that leads away from Bedwell leads to someone or something more interesting than himself – to Postel, the mad Arabist and Christian Cabbalist martyr, to Pococke, Britain's first Arabist of real note, to Bedwell's ecclesiastical patron, the stylish Christian thinker and orator Lancelot Andrews. Bedwell's work has links with researches into the *Ur-Sprache*, with Gopius Becanus, who argued that Flemish was the language spoken in the Garden of Eden, and with the revived interest in Oriental Christian communities that was stimulated by Hakluyt's publications. In the previous century, John Dee had interested himself in the practical art of navigation and in the cabala and in an Oriental Wisdom which might shore up an English Christian Commonwealth. Like the Elizabethan magus, Bedwell professed interests that were both practical and exotic, but in Bedwell the resulting synthesis was more drab.

The dry charm of the man's life and works are well brought out by Alastair Hamilton's fascinating researches now made known in this publication of the Sir Thomas Browne Institute.

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Proud pragmatist

Knowing the throne

Archaic bourgeois structures must
Dictate a bourgeois text:
That methodology once grasped,
It's hermeneutics next.

Simon Curtis (*Poetry Introduction 6*) writes satire rather self-indulgently, but does so with an exuberant display of definition and metrical patness rather than the lingering exasperations of spite. It comes to the same thing, but looks different. Curtis writes bellowingly "stirric" metres ("He was bloody nice, oh too bloody nice, / Could no, and he paid the price, / Went out Martie, who's as cold as ice"). The verbal games keep ringing hollow, like ghostly echoes of the splendid Kit Wright. But the malice at parade of pointedness tend to be in excess of what's being attacked. "Roy and Linda," Adrian Mitchell Kites, and "Colleague" and puff in protracted complacencies of irony. In the latter a new-style lit crit man is put, down:

Archaic bourgeois strictures must
Dictate a bourgeois text:
That methodology once grasped,
It's hermeneutics next.

He's a brand-new desk computer
For poems he takes to bits.
"The author's dead", you understand;
In his place our Ernest sits.

I recognize the type. But Curtis's flailing,
flaccid obviousness lacks the necessary poise
for effective satire, and his hectoring becomes
as boring as the character it castigates.

A poet whose satirical energies do not thus
peter out in a complacent patness is Bernard
O'Donoghue (also represented in the Faber
volume). "O'Regan the Amateur Anatomist"
is an angry thrusting onslaught on a sadistic
type, terse in phrase, driving in its rhythms,
properly extravagant in its apprehensions of
nausea – an unsettling and imaginative balance
of rage and restraint. The poems are mostly
rooted in rural Ireland, without any trace
of folksiness or genial padding.

The "clarity and cool formality" Thwaite
praised in Elizabeth Jennings is also quite
strongly represented in *Poetry Introduction 6*,
which contains quietly accomplished poems by
Susannah Amore and Shirley Bell; and Sarah
Lawson's poems of parental loss, vivid with a
restrained dignity of pain, also just about fall
within the scope of Thwaite's phrase. So
perhaps do some good poems built around
parental relationships or memories in Patricia
McCarthy's *A Second Skin*. (That volume also
has a coy self-portrait called "Curriculum
Vitae", a routine that may be turning into a
fashionable sub-genre. It is reprinted on the
back cover and does the book no good at all.)

The three most interesting new books are
those by Fred D'Aguiar, Vikram Seth and
Oliver Reynolds. The central figure in D'Aguiar's
Mama Dot is a fondly mythologized West
Indian mammy, part flesh-and-blood evocation
(the volume is dedicated to D'Aguiar's
two grandmothers), part Black-Woman-In-
History:

Born on a Sunday
in the kingdom of Ashante

Sold on Monday
into slavery . . .

Dropped on Friday
where they burned she

Freed on Saturday
in a new century

The parody of Solomon Grundy has laconic
energy, as each day's historical irony is ham-
mered out. But it courts self-indulgence and
the closing triumph rings false. The accesses of
West Indian dialect frequently collapse authen-
ticity into cuteness, and D'Aguiar is half-
hearted or at least intermittent in his use of
them. "Letter from Mama Dot", which ends
"*Neva see come fo me*", contains moments of
political analysis whose well-groomed accents
evoke not so much Mama Dot as Auntie Beeb
at her prosiest:

We are more and more
Like another South American dictatorship.
And less and less part of the Caribbean.
Now that we import rice, (rice that used
To grow wild), we queue for most things . . .

D'Aguiar seems to be struggling with a ven-
triloquial bind. Some of the best poems in the
book, even when explicitly concerned with
West Indian themes ("Mama Dot Against the
Overseas Challenge", "Guyanese Days"),
come in very English tones of the 1980s, some
of them learned, I suspect, from Andrew
Motion: hinted narratives with oddly medita-
tive intimations of violence, autobiographical
sequences which are both measured and
fraught.

There's no Mama Dottish folksiness in
Vikram Seth's book:

At home the grandmother has sat down to breakfast
And complains that she is ignored, unloved.

Her blood pressure is high, her spirits low.
She is not allowed to eat gulabjamuns.
The doctor has compiled an Index of Foods
And today, to compound things, is a non-grain fast.
Her dentures hurt. She looks at a stuffed tomato
And considers how to darn her grandson's sweater.

The rich social notation and the ironic flat-
ness recall Eliot's "Aunt Helen" or some of the
social vignettes of *Lustra*, but Pound's idiom of
sharp laconic observation is wholly assimilated
into a fastidious probing language that be-
comes confidently Seth's own. It comes over
without dialectal mannerisms or Poundian
archaizing, despite its exotic settings, Indian,
Californian and Chinese, the latter evoking or
"imitating" Pound's Cathay: "From a
Traveller" is a variation on "Exile's Letter" in a
People's Republic setting (by comparison,
Stuart Henson's People's Republic poem "The
Apocryphal Proverbs of the Fool of Taihang"
is mere inert chinoiserie). The title poem and
"The Accountant's House" are small master-
pieces of delicate verbal and emotional disci-
pline, observant of pathos, of ironies of be-
haviour, of the unexpected small exuberances
of life. And there are some beautiful stanzas
poems, with a sturdy Yvor Winters seriousness
(he and Donald Davie seem to have been
Seth's other formative influences) transfigured
by a witty grace: "A Little Night Music" and
the delightful "Research in Jiangsu Province".

Oliver Reynolds is an original. He has mas-
tered an odd, unpredictable flatness, the
source of haunting effects of violence and
bizarreness. A poem called "Victoriana", about
a prolific contributor to the *OED*, a psychologi-
cal casualty of the American Civil War who
lives in Broadmoor, is a small masterpiece of
"secret narrative", a mini mystery-story based
on a real event and focused on the unlikely
person of Dr Murray, compiler of the *OED*. It
is told in an unrhymed four-line stanza that

both suggests and undercuts the tradition
ballad. Deadpan in manner, apparently
sequential in its continuous fortitude of
expected rhyming closure, it has a
unpredictability. One of its specially effec-
tiveness, also evident in "Cold War", is
a trick of violent pay-offs quietly unfolded by
violence both muffled and made sinister by
studied flatness of idiom and metre, and by
odd bookishness: the Broadmoor inmate
his Ovid and his devotion to the *OED*, the
German prisoner of war who talks Schiller
Goethe, "a Teutonic Ozymandias" crouched
under a T34 which "Pulped his trunk to waste
mulch".

There are other poems in which language
phy provides not the setting for a "secret nar-
rative" but the occasion for puns and nonsense
words. "Anna Colutha in Suffolk" is an ab-
surd punning fantasy with a story-line of
"Pastoral" has an Edward Learish way
exotic coinages which mostly turn out to be
learned mock-nonsense, traceable to
lexiconaries, and the book's third and final
section, largely devoted to Welsh subjects, ex-
hibits a strong sense of place with a peni-
tential for lexical foolery with Welsh words.
The pithiest instance of the latter is "Noddy"
glossed as the Welsh for "note", though the
title can't help evoking both epics (Dante's
and "nodding" ("Homer node"). In this
gem, satire modulates into pure verbal play.

DJs in Broadcasting House
Having trouble reading out
Birthday cards from Machynlleth,
Should note that the consonants
Ll and ch in Welsh resemble
Xl and in Xhosa.

A self-regarding coyness sometimes
in, as in the closing line of "Cheese",
the hard edges of a stylish, exuberantly
pan meditation. The lapse is rare.

"This Is Your Subject Speaking"

In Memoriam Philip Larkin

By Andrew Motion

On one of those evenings
which came out of nowhere,
and one drink led to another,
and then to another,

at well past midnight
(rain stinging the window;
the gas fire burbling)
you suddenly asked me:

If you could meet one poet
– they could be living or dead –
which one would you choose?
Partly to please you

I told you: Hardy. Hardy!
All he would say is: Motion?
One of the Essex Motions perhaps?
Then came your candid guffaw,

and just for the second or so
before I laughed too, I heard
the gramophone arm we'd forgotten
still slithering round

and round on a record, steadily
brushing the label and filling
the room with a heartbeat:
bump; bump; bump; bump; bump.

East of Hull, past the fishdocks,
the mile after mile of raw terraces,
the bulbous, rubbery-looking prison,

fields begin scrappily – the first few
spotted with derelict cars and sheds,
but settling gradually into a pattern:

a stunted hedge; a dead flat expanse
of plough or tussocky grass; another hedge;
another vast expanse; and nowhere

under the leisurely, washed-out clouds
a single thing to disturb the rhythm
until, like a polaroid slowly developing

there is the spire at Patrington –
a fretted tent-pole supporting
the whole enormous weight of the sky.

I told you about it, thinking
your church-going days long gone
and anyway never spent here,

but Yes, you said: *The Queen of Holderness*,
and closed your eyes – seeing yourself,
I suppose, as I see you now:

the new librarian fresh from Ireland,
pedalling off one summery Saturday
(sandwiches packed in your pockets,

grey raincoat tied on the pannier)
finding the church, standing transfixed
by knots of lushly-carved stone

in the nave's subterranean light,
hearing the tired clock, and feeling
that somehow no one had seen this before

or would do again, but nevertheless
convinced it would always be safe:
a shell as withdrawn as the mind

where apart from the weary clock,
and wind rushing the leaded glass,
there was only the sound of your footsteps

clicking the wet green flagstones,
stopping, then clicking onwards again
as you finished your slow, irregular circle.

There was that lunchtime
you strode from the library
half grinning, half scowling
on to the Great White Way.

Would you believe it –
(your head craned down;
your office windows behind
fretting with long net curtains) –

I'm reading the new Barbara Pym,
and she says what a comfort
poetry is, when you're grieving
(but you were laughing):

"a poem by T. S. Eliot;
a passage by Thomas Hardy;
a line by Larkin" . . . a line . . .
And think what I did for her!

One particular night
you were prowling in front of my fireplace
half an eye on your drink, half on supper,

and in the mantelpiece, litter of postcards,
ornaments, bowls of odourless pot-pourri,
discovered a jokey book-mark: "Some say

Life's the thing, but I prefer reading."
Jesus Christ what balls. You spun
round on your heel to the table

almost before your anger took hold,
Later, carefully pushing your glass
through the elaborate debris of napkins

and plates shoved any old how
(so it seemed you were making a move
in chess, or planning a battle):

You see, there's nothing to write
which is better than life itself, no matter
how life might let you down, or pass you by,

and smiled – a sad, incredulous smile
which disallowed everything you or anyone
listening then might have wanted to add.

but then again,
I'm really not surprised to be alone.
"My wife and I have asked a crowd of craps"
and "Keep them all off"

put paid to invitations; I can tell you.
Though there was the time
(you made a fierce deleting bleep)
wrote: "Philip, I've to be in Hull

from February second for a day or so;
I'll get to you at half past six."
What could I do? I had a spare room
but no furniture. So out I went

Innocence and destruction

D. W. Hartnett

JAMES MERRILL
Late Settings
88pp. New York: Atheneum. \$6.95.
0 689 11579 2

In "Mirabell" – the second book of Merrill's
ouija trilogy *The Changing Light at Sandover*
(Atheneum, 1982) – the poet is promised
"ONE POEM BEYOND THIS IN CYCLE
AFTER WHICH / U WILL BE RETURN'D
TO YR CHRONICLES OF LOVE & LOSS".
The implied contrast is between *Sandover's*
mythic enterprise and the earlier, more per-
sonal poetry subsequently collected in *From
the First Nine* (Atheneum, 1982). Now comes
Late Settings where the lyric stream does
indeed seem to have resurfaced.

In fact Merrill is more consistent than either
he or his supernatural voices would have us
believe. The poems in *From the First Nine*
show a continual attempt to fashion myth from
autobiography: Merrill's personal odyssey
from the "Broken Home" of his parents' di-
vorce to the fleeting integrations both of ma-
ture sexuality and the imaginative life has been
plotted with the aid of what M. H. Abrams
suggests is a governing Romantic (and post-
Romantic) obsession: the myth of a secular fall
and redemption. In this light the trilogy seems
less of a departure than a continuation. From
Ephraim's cycles of reincarnation to the
angels' pseudo-Blakean creation legends, its
supernatural material focuses a consistent fall/
redemption pattern, a pattern which, in turn,
clarifies the autobiographical theme. The only
difference now is that the myth threatens to
become autonomous.

So *Late Settings* cannot simply return to pri-
vate "love and loss" since privacy was never
without a mythical resonance. But not – as a
post-*Sandover* volume – can it repeat earlier
lyric successes. Though the collection is framed
by a myth of innocence versus apocalypse there
is a new sense of historical actuality which owes
much to the trilogy. At the same time Merrill is
much more confident about his personal con-
text. So, in "Grass", intimations of individual
and universal mortality exist side by side: "We
light up between / Earth and Venus / On the
courthouse lawn, / Kept by this cheerful / Inch

of green / and ten more years – fifteen? – / From
disappearing". The fussy decision of that
penultimate line allows Merrill to link apoca-
lypse (the fatefully occult year 2000) and his
own death. But it also ensures that universal
destruction (itself an episode in the fall myth)
takes on a new relevance: the end of the world
is no longer biblical but nuclear.

Poems like "Topics" and "Page from the
Koran" entertain similar forebodings. In the
latter the poet buys an Islamic antique on the
same day that "fire . . . / Had half erased
Beirut". The gulf between mind and action is
webbed by guilty complicity. By assuming a
historical reality the apocalyptic motif has ex-
posed the darker side of creativity. The en-
suing syntactical convolutions register great
strain. Elsewhere this strain can be too much;
"Days of 1941-44" placates and exorcises the
ghost of a childhood enemy killed in action
during the Second World War. Beneath the
reminiscences there lurks a perennial subject:
the fallen and divided poetic self. But the way
the verse veers between camp comedy ("This
time, too, it's your pants up the flagpole!")
and an almost visionary exhilaration suggests
that Merrill wants his myth to be both more
and less than mere illustration. The effect is
deeply ambivalent.

The clutch of wilderness poems has more
poise. In "Developers at Crystal River" and
"A Day on the Connecticut River" Merrill's
Emersonian sense of natural innocence is fil-
tered through human eyes. Here poet and
mahatee come face to face: "She drifts closer,
/ Flippers held out, deprecative, but lonely,
/ Makes to salute / Her long-lost cousin with a
/ Flipper, his cantera and ylor. / Time stops as
/ face to face, / She offers what he'll only / Back
on earth find words for – a useful, chaste,
/ Unshaven kiss." The tentative lineation is
beautifully apposite.

But the main achievement of *Late Settings*
rests on long meditations, "Bronze" and "San-
torini", stopping the Leak. With familiar
panache "Bronze" winds down two separate
anecdotal streams: a tip to see the restored
Riace statues in Florence and a second-hand
account of wartime heroism. Familiar too is the
way these streams merge in an allegory of the
divided self, striving to reconcile the maternal
and the paternal. What is new is the way myth
takes on an autonomy through its proximity to

the poet. The statues actually speak to him,
and their apocalyptic tone is all the more sinis-
ter for being cast in convivial anapaests.
"Sanторинi" revolves round a trip to the
Aegean island whose eruption may have con-
tributed to the Atlantis legend. This event pro-
vides Merrill with the twin poles of Edenic
innocence and apocalyptic destruction which
he needs to frame his personal theme: the
artist's frustrated longing for a cultural and
sexual focus. But once again the life-blood of
the myth bubbles up through the voice of ex-
perience. The poem achieves a sort of oracular
casualness, an intermixture of chatty inco-
herence and occult wisdom that disables any
attempt to separate myth from fact. So three
gourmandizing sisters are and are not the

Natural surprises

Tim Dooley

JOAN DOWNAR
The Empire of Light
68pp. Liskeard: Harry Chambers/Peterloo
Poets. £4.50.
0905291 52 2

Joan Downar's first collection, *The Empire of
Light*, is lucid but artful. It takes its title from a
painting by René Magritte of an evening scene,
street-lit, below a bright, summery, day-time
sky: dislocation of the expected depending on
the juxtaposition of contradictory naturalistic
views rather than any outrageous shock. It is an
image which is particularly appropriate to
Downar's work. Her poetry naturalizes its sur-
prises and throws daylight on the concerns of
evening.

Like several of the poets in Harry Cham-
bers's Peterloo Poets series, Downar is a
mature writer whose poetry ranges over the
experience of a number of decades. "In a
Hayfield, 1945" combines first-hand sensuous
description ("The scent / is thick and prickly as
stalks"), evocation of a particular historical
moment ("the sun, pouring / its heat on already
euphoric / people, uncurled belief") and sug-
gestive symbolism. The arrival of new machin-
ery to a corner of England that seemed "for a

while / impenetrable" is cheered by children
"as if / a conqueror arrived."

Such an unfussy movement between dif-
ferent moods and different levels of meaning is
characteristic of Downar's poetry. Emme-
rant metaphor that makes of noble hills "dome-
late mounds . . . like a lake / monster mounding
is part of the pleasure her poems offer. She
does not dominate them. Like the river she
she describes in "Bland Landscape", her poems
"subdues / both mound and man to its own
use". Particularly impressive are the poems
written to a friend dying in New Zealand and
the rather Marvellian poem about gardens
which she evokes a "tenuous / Eden". Downar
takes straight-forward poems such as "Star-
and "Gifts" filter feminist insights through
application and irony. Downar's art is not
concerned with drawing attention to itself, but
wry indirectness demonstrates most her wis-
dom as a poet.

The latest issue of *Agenda* (Volume 10, No. 4,
Autumn-Winter, 1985-6) contains a symposium
on Geoffrey Hill's *Collected Poems* (1984)
(which will be reviewed in a future issue of
TLS). This double issue also has sections on
Pound and Eliot, including an essay on
formerly by the latter. Subscriptions cost £10
annum, from 5 Cranbourne Court,
Bridge Road, London SW11 4PE.

and spent a fortune on a bed,
a bed-side table, chest-of-drawers,
a looking-glass, "that" (you grinned)
"that vase." Anyway, he came and went.

and then a second letter: "My dear Philip;
wonderful to see you looking well. Thank you
for your hospitality, and jazz, and drink,
and talk." But not a word about the furniture.

★

Now look at this.
We were stooped side by side
to a glass display-case in the library.

Two poems in two days: "Forget What Did"
and then "High Windows". No corrections!
Well, not many

Your writing ran
across the dark reflection of your face
in lolloping, excited lines. Don't ask me

why I stopped. I didn't stop. It stopped.
In the old days I'd go home at six
and write all evening on a board

across my knees. But now . . . I go home
and there's nothing there, I'm like a chicken
with no egg to lay. Your breath swam red

in a tiny fog across the glass,
cleared, and showed you staring down
a second longer, reading through the line

then straightening. Not bad. But that's enough
of that (one hand sternly guiding me away)
Come on. This is someone's subject speaking.

★

PS.
You know that new anthology?
The one that Mary Wilson edited -
the favourite poems of the famous?

Have you seen it?
Ca'aghan and Mrs T and I
all chose Gray's Elegy.
Why wasn't I Prime Minister?

★

The last time we met
(If I'm lucky I'll know
which time is the last.

Unlucky, I mean)
was in the Nursing Home:
buttery afternoon light,

a hot, boxed-in corridor
tiled with lime-green carpet,
the door to your room ajar

and you in your linen suit
watching the Test on telly.
In the silence after applause

or laconic reports, your voice
was the cold, flat voice
of someone describing someone

they hardly knew. Nobody's said
what's wrong with me -
and I haven't asked. Don't you.

Well I've nothing to live for,
have I? Christ, don't answer.
You'll tell me I have. Like seeing



Becker at Wimbledon, winning.
He looked just like young Auden.
That was good. I'm sure I'll die

when I'm as old as my father.
Which gives me until Christmas.
I simply can't cheer up -

and don't you start.
And don't you go, please, either,
till I've had my exercise.

Like skaters terrified their ice
might crack, we shuffled
gingerly around the patch of lawn

and fed each other lines:
how warm it was; how fast
the daisies grew; how difficult

low branches on an apple tree
made reaching the four corners -
anything which might slow down

the endless, easy journey
to your room, the corridor again,
and then the glass front door.

The trouble is, I've written
scenes like this so many times
there's nothing to surprise me.

But that doesn't help one bit.
It just appals me. Now you go.
I won't come out. I'll watch you.

So you did: both hands lifted
palms out, fingers spread -
more like someone shocked

or fending something off
in passive desperation
than like someone waving -

but still clearly there,
and staring through the door
when I looked from my car.

waved back, pulled out,
then quickly vanished
down an avenue of sycamores

where glassy flecks of sunlight
skittered through the leaves, falling
blindingly along the empty street.

Letters

'Lost Magic Kingdoms'

Sir, - In his review of Eduardo Paolozzi's exhibition *Lost Magic Kingdoms and Six Paper Moons* at the Museum of Mankind (Commentary, January 24) Tom Phillips does not mention the fact that similar decontextualized displays can be seen at every preview of a Solleby's or Christie's tribal-art sale. It is remarkable that the national museum of non-Western artefacts should stage an exhibition so devoid of anthropological understanding or educational intent. Paolozzi transforms artefacts into art-objects by displaying them like a collection of pinned butterflies. Old photographs of anonymous natives are projected to heighten the sense of the exotic. Art critics have praised the exhibition precisely because its psychedelic jumble of "tribal" items requires no knowledge of any social function that these objects had in their societies of manufacture. It is a collection of "tribal" lost property assembled by an aesthete as an exercise in ethno-voyeuristic surrealism. If the message is that non-Western peoples are capable of creating things by using the materials at hand and that items of material culture demonstrate the effects of social change, surely this is common knowledge.

JOSEPH BRANT.

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We regret that owing to industrial action not all printing errors in this issue have been corrected, and a number of reviews and letters have been held over. We also apologize to readers who have had difficulty in obtaining the paper; distribution arrangements should soon be back to normal.

American notes

Christopher Hitchens

To miss a PEN congress need be, or so one tells oneself, no great thing. As Susan Sontag wrote, exactly twenty years ago, of one such gathering in Yugoslavia:

It was almost too easy to be cynical. The official theme of the congress was that venerable catch-all, "The Writer and Contemporary Society", and, as W. H. Auden (who was invited and didn't come) is reported to have said to Stephen Spender (who did come), surely in the last thirty years everything that can be said on that subject has been said.

And, in the same 1966 essay:

And PEN? What was that? In New York: a joke, a bore, something to be polite to. Monthly postcards announcing cocktails at the Hotel Pierre on which one might be improbably promised the chance to meet at one fell swoop Virginia Kirkus, William Burroughs and Isaac Bashevis Singer? Expensive dinner at the Overseas Press Club with dessert a lecture on how to write articles for travel magazines, or a panel discussion on whether the modern novel is going "too far"? And if the activities of the American PEN are rather remote from literature as an art, what would an International PEN Congress do but compound the distance?

As a conference rubric, "The Imagination of the Writer and the Imagination of the State" seems hardly less of an old Dobbin trotted round the paddock than did "The Writer and Contemporary Society" two decades ago. Yet such was the announced theme of Norman Mailer's PEN International jamboree last month. And among the first greyhounds out of the trap was the *cl-devant* blase Ms Sontag. Hers was the top signature on a petition repudiating Norman Mailer's invitation to the US Secretary of State, George Shultz. As E. L. Doctorow complained, in his article igniting the controversy, it is Shultz's State Department that employs the risible McCarran-Walter Act to keep "undesirable" writers out of the United States. And PEN has long campaigned for the repeal of those sections of the Act which allow this. Moreover, Mailer had issued the invitation without consulting the PEN executive board. And furthermore . . . as I write this, the *New York Times* reports that Ms Sontag and Mr Mailer are still not speaking, and that Mr Mailer expects to pay "with years of bad reviews" for his unscripted remarks about the under-representation of women.

Only two months ago (see *American notes*, November 29) I was attempting to ridicule Mailer for describing the United States administration as one of "musical comedy fascism".

There have been two ideas of America which have been quarrelling. The first is, if I may put it very broadly, an idea of America held by Americans, and the other is an idea of America held by everyone else. It is not surprising that the American view of America should be an interior view and the non-American view of America should be an exterior view. But it seemed to me worth asking about, if you like, the allocation of the American writer from the

'Jesus Through the Centuries'

Sir, - Anthony Burgess is quite right (in his review of Jaroslav Pelikan's *Jesus Through the Centuries*, December 20) to find "highly disturbing" the elevation of the message above the institutions required to make it meaningful. But Burgess is wrong to say that "there are probably very few Pelagians around these days". Pelagius stood for a doctrine requiring the diminution of differences among people, differences he believed perpetuated by earthly ecclesiastical institutions. Reducing inequalities between women and men, children and parents, young and old, experts and laymen, even animals and people, is the grand passion of the West today. But there is no Augustine who knows that without social differences there can be no moral differences, nor churches that institutionalize them. No legitimate inequality, no institutions, no authority, no church.

AARON WILDAVSKY.

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'Freud for Historians'

Sir, - Your choice of reviewers is at times puzzling. We all know what Ernest Gellner thinks of psychoanalysis, and asking him to review (January 24) Peter Gay's book *Freud for Historians* is tantamount to asking for the book to be dismissed. This Professor Gellner has done, using the main body of his review for reiterating his well-known rejection of psychoanalysis, or rather the orthodox Freud-

ian version of it. For like other opponents of psychoanalysis he takes no notice of the fact that there has been criticism of the original Freudian position among psychoanalysts themselves, and that many of Freud's concepts have been rethought and reformulated.

You illustrate my point admirably in the review which follows Gellner's. I refer to Peter Fuller's assessment of Daniel Weiss's collection of psychoanalytically oriented literary criticism. Fuller, as his books show, is interested in psychoanalytic theory though (like Charles Rycroft whose writings he recently edited) he disagrees with many of its original propositions. His review of Weiss's book, though strongly critical of Weiss's adherence to strictly Freudian principles, is informed and constructive rather than just dismissive.

HANS W. COHN.

7 Fabye House, Cumberland Road, Kew, Richmond, Surrey.

Toy Soldiers

Sir, - John Carswell's review of James Opie's *Britain's Toy Soldiers 1893-1932* (December 20), interesting though it was, contained one inaccuracy. As a keen collector of Britain's soldiers from 1914 to 1922, I do not agree that "it is significant that neither world war made much difference to Britain's offerings". With their fathers, uncles and older brothers in khaki, boys had little interest in red-coated soldiers. Aware of this, Britain's first sold infantry and cavalry of the BEF in full-order khaki with flat caps, then British infantry (1916) in full equipment and tin hats (and later with gas masks). These were sold at the same

time as khaki-clad machine-gunners, dispatch riders and lorry drivers. Britain's also made naval landing parties and French poilus in blue-grey and steel helmets. They sold army vehicles, field guns, and howitzers; but not German soldiers. For the enemy I used Bulgarian and Russian infantry dressed in dark green for the Balkan wars, although I think that Turks were available. (As for the Second World War, I understand that Britain's were unable to use lead for models.)

One further point: is it true to say that "Britain's army belongs to the days of the Jubilee and Durbar which ended with 1914"? The excellent models in lead composition now sold by them to collectors are mostly wearing the uniforms required in 1985 for Trooping the Colour and Changing the Royal Guard.

E. J. RENDLE.

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Inventing Boswell

Sir, - Some malign influence garbled a reference to Boswell in my review (January 10) of *A Book of One's Own* by Thomas Mallon and *The Innan' Diary* so that it read: "It fits Boswell, who is often said to have invented James Boswell as well." This makes, not exactly sense, but plausible-sounding nonsense. I hope I may correct it. What I wrote was: "It fits Boswell, who is often said to have invented the Johnson we read about, but sometimes seems to have invented James Boswell as well."

JULIAN SYMONS.

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sense of America as an international phenomenon. This at a conference where John Updike said that he had friendly feelings for the State because he liked mailboxes and always had. That's hugging the shore if you like.

★ ★ ★

It is sobering to think that the *National Review* has just turned thirty. During that time, it has acted as one of the great accidental bloodstock stables of the contemporary scene. It gave an early start to Joan Didion, John Leonard, Gary Wills and Renata Adler as critics and essayists. The fact that they have all defected, in different ways, from the magazine's catholic and conservative style is a sincere inverse tribute to its editor, William Buckley. So is the very survival of an uncommercial weekly which must still pretend, in a time of Toryism resurgent, to be iconoclastic and against the stream. It wasn't always so. To look back is to re-live the most anguished and intense debates about education and about the relationship between *clerics* and *trahison*.

Hugh Kenner was almost driven from his post as the magazine's Poetry Editor because he published the "fellow-traveller" William Carlos Williams. A saving spaciousness on Buckley's part averted this and other (though not all) atrocities. He once spilled a lot of ink to prove that Evelyn Waugh had not called him a bore. A touching work of supererogation.

★ ★ ★

There has been unusual interest in the latest loan exhibit to go on view in the National Gallery in Washington. The exhibit consists of a single picture - Titian's seven-foot-high representation of the Playing of Marsyas (shown in Britain in *The Genius of Venice* exhibition at the Royal Academy, TLS December 9, 1983). The stark gruesomeness of the painting, which Titian completed shortly before his death in 1576, has provoked numerous allegorical commentaries. The best of these, and the most persuasive, comes from Sydney J. Freedberg, Chief Curator of the National Gallery. Freedberg hypothesizes that the picture originates in one of Venice's greatest humiliations: the capture of the city gave Cyprus to Lala Mustafa, who promptly broke the terms of the surrender by putting the Venetian commander, Marcantonio Bragadino, to death. The mode of execu-

tion, all sources agree, was flaying. The news arrived in Venice and created widespread misery and shock: replaced by extraordinary jubilation a few months later with the tidings of Lepanto. As Freedberg writes,

If our assumptions are correct the idea of the *Marsyas* was born out of the tragedy of Famagusta and the torture of Bragadino, but it was developed in the aftermath of exaltation over Lepanto . . . since it was unthinkable in Titian's aesthetic that it could be depicted as a historical occurrence, it had to be represented by analogue, and the flaying of Marsyas was ready to hand.

This theory has the advantage of fitting the action as well as the atmosphere of the painting, in which Apollo and Marsyas appear almost to be in balance despite their contrasted roles as executioner and victim.

★ ★ ★

Americans approve of *vers d'occasion*, as was demonstrated by the response to Robert Frost's appearance at the John F. Kennedy Inaugural. But the idea of a poet laureate has always been regarded with suspicion here, because of its monarchic associations. This month, however, the Library of Congress is likely to nominate a laureate, who will serve under that title and also under the more democratic heading of "Poetry Consultant to The Congress". (The laureateship will carry an emolument of \$10,000, and the consultancy a salary of \$35,000.)

Keen as I am on republican institutions, I still think that this change is a boon. For a start, it will relieve the White House of its role as poetry consultant; a role it has discharged with conspicuous lack of brio. The difficulty was well illustrated in the last week of January, when the space catastrophe seemed to call for something more than mere prose: Ronald Reagan ended his speech to the nation with the idea that the seven dead astronauts had "slipped the fiery bonds of earth / to touch the face of God". After several false starts, I was able to establish from the White House that these inapposite lines come from "High Flight", composed by John Gillespie Magee, an American pilot who was killed in action in December 1941, while serving with the Royal Canadian Air Force. I thought that I had heard the poem somewhere before and I was right. For the last six years (the term of Reagan's presidency) it has been played as a video at the close down of Washington's Channel 9 television station. A laureate would be preferable.

COMMENTARY

Beastly but British

Hugh Brogan

Revolution
Warner West End Cinema

Revolution is an extraordinarily simple-minded movie. The story would have fitted perfectly into the old *St Nicholas* magazine under some such title as "The Drummer Boy". Ben, son of a farmer on Long Island, impulsively enlists in the rebel army on July 4, 1776, and thereby involves himself and his father Tom in a series of bloody adventures from which they emerge, stout American patriots, united to their respective sweethearts, in 1783. Fresh-faced lads, aged about nine and notably guileless for their age, resident in such places as upstate Vermont, might enjoy themselves at the film, but not the rest of us.

The procession of anachronistic clichés is unspeakably wearisome. In a sense, the whole film is anachronistic: a nineteenth-century legend of noble Yankees and beastly British presented to the late twentieth century. You would never guess that General Washington flogged his men (and no doubt his drummer boys) when discipline required it, quite as readily as General Howe. It is hinted that the revolutionary soldiers got a raw deal from Congress, but the full tale of ineptitude, callousness and betrayal is not for a moment allowed to blur the picture of a united people nobly struggling to be free. Nor is there any glimpse of the real issues of the Revolution (caused, it will be remembered, by a tax on tea). The respectable classes of America figure only as collaborators with the enemy, the work of the Revolution being carried out solely by a mob led by vociferous Irish harridans. We breathe the real atmosphere of the time only for one pleasant moment when Ben is shown how David Rittenhouse's orrery works, and Jefferson's name is mentioned.

But I have never thought it fair to judge works of the imagination such as Verdi's *Don Carlos* or *The Three Musketeers* by the standards of the historian. If they succeed in their

own terms, that is enough. Unfortunately *Revolution* has no terms. It is memorable only as a great British disaster (I am not alluding to Yorktown) projected, I dare say, by a vain-glorious ambition to show that we too can mount a *Heaven's Gate*. It is uncanny to see the lessons of that great if flawed film being misunderstood: its faults sedulously copied, its virtues ignored.

The director's modern preoccupations work havoc with his portrayal of an actual past society. Thus, the heroine is a hard, bad-tempered, boneheaded young woman; blacks are shown playing useful, if modest, revolutionary roles (the word *slave* never occurs) and when Jews are to get their hour in the sun, lo, a girl who might be Barbra Streisand's younger sister turns up to marry Ben. The casting of Al Pacino as Tom is almost as calamitous as the casting of Kris Kristofferson in *Heaven's Gate*. Pacino is an infinitely better actor, but he so patently belongs to urban, Italian, twentieth-century America that all hope of taking this film seriously as a vision of the Revolution evaporates whenever he is on screen, which is most of the time. Worse is the fact that almost all the other actors are patently English, even when they are supposed to be Americans, which is also most of the time. The only successful performances are by Donald Sutherland, as a brutal but essentially decent British sergeant-major, and Joan Plowright, an incredible New York *grande dame* but an utterly convincing mother – enraged, baffled, anxious. The scene in which she finally confronts her daughter, the aforesaid heroine, is, in its way, the funniest thing since Sybil Thorndike laid eyes on Marilyn Monroe.

Gore Vidal has long insisted that to succeed, a movie must have a good script. *Revolution* hardly seems to have a script at all. Why on earth didn't the makers of it buy the rights to Vidal's *Burr*, and hire the author as script-writer? Now there is a work with something to say. Goldcrest Films don't deserve to get a penny back of the fortune they have squandered on this stillborn epic.

Alice at eighty

David Sexton

Dreamchild
Curzon Cinema, Mayfair

How important was Alice Pleasance Liddell to *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland*? Great claims have been made. Sentimentalists have called her Carroll's Laura, his Beatrice, the other half of the question is more disillusioning: how important was *Alice* to Alice? The two recent biographies of her, Anne Clark's *The Real Alice* of 1981 and Colin Gordon's *Beyond the Looking Glass* of 1982, both suggested that she found the fame it

brought a burden. Mrs Hargreaves, as she became, wrote to her son: "But, oh, my dear, I am tired of being Alice in Wonderland. Does it sound ungrateful? It is – only I do get tired."

The Carrolls are tireless, however, and new editions, studies, continuations and treatments pour forth. There have been many film versions of *Alice*, from 1903 onwards. The first talkie was in 1931. In 1933 there was an all-star Paramount adaptation with Cary Grant and Douglas Fairbanks. In 1948 an Anglo-French version used puppets. In 1951 Walt Disney made his cartoon travesty, now released as a video. In 1966 Jonathan Miller directed a mannered television version (which he himself regretted when he gave the Clark Lectures in Cambridge last year). Possibly the worst of the lot was the 1972 film, which had Fiona Pullerton as Alice, and Peter Sellers as the March Hare. The latest, *Dreamchild*, is a Thom EMI Pennies from Heaven production, scripted by Denis Potter and directed by Gavin Miller.

Dreamchild is not a version of the books, but a dramatization of the relationship between Dodgson and Alice Liddell (and at another level between "Alice" and "Alice"), using the books intermittently. The year is 1932. Mrs Alice Hargreaves, aged eighty, tells to New York to take part in the celebrations of the centenary of Carroll's birth. The old woman (excellently played by Coral Browne) is frail. Pressed by journalists, she begins to remember both her childhood days with Dodgson, and the story he told her. She becomes confused, and hallucinates *Wonderland* scenes in which she switches suddenly from confident child to addled old lady; the creatures sometimes turn into Carroll himself. Dodgson materializes in the 1932 New York hotel room; she finds herself flashed back to the Oxford of the 1860s.

The makers of the film have perceived that the *Alice* books contain a great deal of frightening, primitive material about ageing and death, and they have made it all explicit. There are obvious ironies in an eighty-year-old Alice,

Watching the stage-space

Philip Brady

Caspar Neher: Brecht's Designer
Riverside Studios, until February 16

Brecht – perhaps surprisingly for one so certain of his goals – frequently spoke up for doubt as a guiding principle. And he linked principle to practice: doubt, the argument ran, was creative because it meant being alert to alternatives; alternatives emerged through discussion; discussion must be at the heart of theatre-work. In other words, a curious mixture of certainty about goals and uncertainty about methods produced a brand of theatre which was genuinely a collaborative affair, and the collaboration – between author, co-producer, composer, actors, technicians – was often so interactive that it is difficult to untangle Brecht's own particular efforts, let alone the efforts of those with whom he worked.

The exhibition at Riverside Studios, accompanied by an informative book by John Willett (128pp. Methuen, £5.95, 0 413 41240 7), which will be published on April 10, vividly documents one particular area of collaboration, that between Brecht and his designer Caspar Neher. The two had met very early – in the fourth form at the same Augsburg school – and by 1917 Brecht was already convinced of his friend's special graphic gifts. Almost forty years later he was still convinced – when Brecht died in 1956 in the midst of rehearsals for *The Life of Galileo* his designer was Neher. It was not only the longest of Brecht's many collaborations, it was also one of the closest.

"Collaboration" is indeed too simple a term for Neher's activities, just as "designer" simplifies his function. As Willett explains, Neher disliked the German term *Bühnenbildner* because it suggested a static, pictorial role, whereas he sought to design a peopled space. But Neher's special importance lies in the fact that in many cases his creative imagination encompassed more than is commonly under-

stood by design. Design there certainly is: the half-curtain, a favourite device; the exposed, low-slung lamps, the exquisite furnishing, the movable screens, the half-enclosed spaces, but Neher's understated colours, the tension between spiky penlines and wet washes, are almost more suggestive than specific. They achieve delicate, atmospheric effects almost untranslatable into stage-language.

The earliest sketches in particular, for *Baal* and *Drums in the Night*, with their pinks and greys washing over and half dissolving the way outlines of houses and objects, seem to express mood rather than detailed staging. Later, however, most notably in sketches for *Man equals Man*, a different kind of creativity is at work. The stage recedes, giving way to groupings of figures caught at precise moments in the play and articulating what is indeed a key theme: the shifting, unstable relationship between its enigmatic central character and a coherent group. Not surprisingly, such sketches became for Brecht a source of ideas, because when Neher assembles the players in the stage-space, accentuating gesture or half-life, he seems both to freeze an instant while suggesting the flow of a scene. Neher is producing the play before the rehearsals have even started.

In short, these are pictures to watch rather than simply to look at. We can watch Neher controlling the crowds in *The Threepenny Opera* and *Happy End*, or, in a series of monochrome sketches for *The Mother*, we can watch him grouping and regrouping two or three figures within a changing, minimal stage-set. And we can watch him expressing moments of exuberant motion at some of the crazier climaxes in *Mr Puntila and his Man Matt*. There seems little doubt that Brecht was also watching. How far Neher was in practice a kind of co-creator, how far Brecht came to see through Neher's eyes, is a tantalizing but, in the end, probably unanswerable question. But now, at long last, thanks to John Willett's pioneering rescue of this fascinating artist from under Brecht's shadow, we can at least ask the question.

AUTHOR, AUTHOR

Competition No 264

Readers are invited to identify the sources of the three quotations which follow and to send in their answers so that they reach this office not later than February 28. The solution and results will appear in March 7.

1 In my younger and more vulnerable years my father gave me some advice I've been turning over in my mind ever since.

2 I suppose the high-water mark of my youth is Columbus, Ohio, was the night the bed fell on my father.

3 I never knew my mother for she died too early, and my father, who gave me the princely name Stephen O'Shaughnessy, stopped taking care of me when I was five years old, and surrendered himself to unemployment from job to job. He was not a bad man in his own way, and the few times he visited the orphanage events I remembered a long time.

Competition No 260

Winner: E. A. Martin

Answers:

1 It was looking over and beyond everything of the present and far into the past. It was gazing out over the Ocean of Time – over the lines of century waves, which, further and further receding, closed round and nearer together, and blended at last into one unbroken tide, away toward the horizon of remote antiquity.

2 Mark Twain, *Innocence Abroad*, the Spenser. "As I stood and gazed, it terrified me to find that I had worn that queen-like smile for thirteen centuries – that she had lain in the darkness of the earth; and still had smiled – that she had seen the slow decay of years, grind her fair breast and limbs, and yet still smiled – that now she rests as victoriously as you smile, she gazed on shouting worshippers."

3 All this has been to her but as the sound of typewriters, and lives on only in the delirious way which has imbued the changing lineaments, and changed the eyelids and the hands. The fancy of a prophetic and sweeping together ten thousand characters of the old one; and modern philosophy has conceived the idea of humanity as wrought upon by, and living in itself, all modes of life and thought.

Walter Pater, "Notes on Leonardo", in *The Renaissance*.

Stretching manly ears

Witold Mellers

J. PETER BURKHOLDER
Charles Ives: The ideas behind the music
160pp. Yale University Press. £17.95.
030020617

Born in 1874, Charles Ives lived until 1954, but relinquished composition in the early 1920s. The reasons for this have never been adequately explained (and perhaps explanation is impossible); though they may be in part psychosomatic, since he was not only neglected by his contemporaries, but sometimes reviled. He lived to make a fortune in the insurance business, which he believed to be a force for moral good; and to witness the beginning of his acceptance as at once the grand old man of American music and a patron saint of its avant-garde. Now he seems not only the greatest American composer, but also the first major composer of democratic principle.

Over the past two decades there has been no dearth of critical attention to Ives. Books about him, his work and world, proliferate, many of them outcrops of postgraduate theses. J. Peter Burkholder's *Charles Ives: The ideas behind the music* is the latest of them. It begins with an obfuscation, since in his preface Burkholder suggests that Ives, owing to his democratic plurality, is a difficult composer to come to grips with. This seems to me untrue: he is direct and immediate in his American empiricism; one needs only to listen with open ears, heart and mind. When, in his later, major works, he is sometimes difficult, he is so in the sense that any great composer may be; he asks much of us because he gives a lot.

None the less, charting a course through Ives's career, Burkholder helps us to see how apparently contradictory strands in his nature cohere. Chronological sequence makes sense, so long as one doesn't interpret it too strictly, for the early "conventional" pieces may often be prophetic, while the late "progressive" pieces may contain throwbacks. In the first phase of his creative life, when he lived in Danbury, Connecticut, Ives accepted, indeed relished, that society of small farmers and tradesmen, chapel and circus goers, barmen and poolshooters, finding the wellspring of his music in the town band (which his father directed), the chapel hymn, the parlour ballad, the circus parade march, the minstrel show. He had no musical ambitions except to make professionally competent music for such people to

sing and dance to: though his father gave to these activities an extra dimension, training him not only in academic techniques based mainly on the "manly" classical composers, Beethoven and Brahms, but also encouraging him to "stretch the ears" by acoustical experiments such as may be endemic to a rawly democratic world. Early adventures with microtones, polytonality, polymetre, atonality, improvisation within notated composition, the breaking of barriers between noise and organized sound, were a species of game-playing which in a New World might keep the mind, as well as the ears, lively and flexible. Though Ives senior didn't advise their use in professional composition, Ives junior never forgot what he'd learned from these boyish acoustical pranks, any more than he forgot the human centrality of the low musics he'd lived with and on.

The second phase of Ives's career, according to Burkholder, dates from his entry into Yale. Inheriting from his father an acute and wide-ranging mind, Charles sought advancement at university, without overt intention to become a professional in the world of art music. But as George Ives's flicker of genius fanned, in his son, into a broad flame, the bright-eyed and wide-eyed student gravitated inevitably towards music, becoming a pupil of – or at least attending classes by – Horatio Parker, the most respected composer of the previous generation. The conventional account is that piratical Ives rebelled against Parker's technically academic discipline. Burkholder thinks this is no more than a half-truth, though he admits that Charles, while admiring Parker for the decent integrity and even the "nobility" of his music, said that his father was "by far the greater man". Burkholder is probably on the mark in maintaining that Parker, though in a sense repressive, was in another sense a liberating agent in that through him Ives became more deeply and widely aware of the traditions of art music – European in origin, yet capable of American metamorphosis. Moreover, university life did not diminish Ives's democratic zest; his interest in vaudeville, jazz, ragtime and barrelhouse piano prospered at Yale and in the urban environment of New York. During these "years of apprenticeship" (1894–1902) Ives began to weld together the disparate elements he'd been nurtured on. He still improvised or composed rags and marches, but began to transmute them by integrating them into "art". Gradually, he stopped writing pop tunes of his own. "Ironically," as Burkholder puts it, "the celebration of innocence requires

its loss, and paying tribute to the spirit and substance of vernacular music required forsaking its outward forms." In these years he produced a fairly but not totally genteel cantata (*The Celestial Country*), a piano trio, a symphony, a string quartet, and the "pre" first violin sonata. His forms were European, with his beloved Beethoven and Brahms in the offing, and with Dvořák lending occasional sugar to American spice. Already, however, Ives's forms were "open", empirical, evolving morphologically, like America herself.

During these years Ives seems to have nurtured hopes that he might become professional in the field of art music, as servant of his church and as a maker of works for the concert-halls of the prosperous middle class. But tension between professional obligations and the powerful self-discovery effected in and through his music proved intractable. Although he was a formidable organist, church congregations couldn't stomach his dissonances; nor could Bach's, and no doubt Bach, like Ives, believed that God at least was on his side and might not object to an occasional dissonance, might even, "in his all-embracing wisdom, positively enjoy one now and again". When Ives resigned from his church appointment, that was the end of apprenticeship, and the beginning of what Burkholder calls "innovation and synthesis". Henceforth, making his living in commerce, Ives could confront musical and philosophical problems without prevarication or compromise since immediate performance was not in question. It's improbable that he thought he was composing for "posterity", more likely that he used music for his own and America's ends: his own, because his explorations, synthesizing musical traditions with demotic "jokes" and "stunts", were a discovery of his own identity; America's, because he was, if far more able and gifted than most, a representative democratic man, whether others recognized this or not. In these years (1902–08) appeared the first masterpieces – the Second and Third Symphonies, the *Holidays Symphony*, and (especially) *Three Places in New England* and the First Piano Sonata.

Significantly, Ives's creative fulfilment coincides with personal fulfilment in his marriage to the beautiful and charmingly named Harmony Twichell, whose family was more conventionally "cultivated" than the lively Iveses, and who reinforced his liberal evangelicism and his religious and philosophical idealism. In harmony with Harmony – it seems to have been an enduringly rewarding partnership – Ives worked unhurriedly on the major com-

positions of his final phase, which Burkholder calls "years of maturity" (1908–17). To these years belong the later violin sonatas, the most adventurous of his songs, and his biggest, most grandly characteristic works, the Fourth Symphony and the *Concord Sonata*. The latter was regarded by Ives as a summation of his spiritual life, but also as a testament to the world that had made him, which he associated with a highly personal view of the Concord Transcendentalists, Emerson, Hawthorne, the Alcott family and Thoreau. Burkholder thinks that too much has been made of the influence of the Transcendentalists on Ives – especially Emerson, about whom he probably knew little before he married Harmony. He unnecessarily knocks down a few Aunt Sallies, for the point is surely not that Ives borrowed this or the other from the Transcendentalists, but simply that he stands, in his religious and philosophical heritage, for a comparable fusion of the physical with the metaphysical, the real with the ideal. If the *Concord Sonata* is not only Ives's best-known but also his best work, the reason may be that here more consummately than anywhere he fulfils his American vision of the Whole. The sonata is inexhaustibly rich and rewarding: as Ives himself must have thought, since he tinkered with it throughout the thirty years of his retirement, and wrote apropos it his most substantial prose work, *Essays before a Sonata* – an *apologia pro vita sua*.

Discussing this dense if somewhat inchoate writing Burkholder sifts the sources of Ives's "thought" meticulously, though he leaves us questioning whether the effort is justified. Ives's thought – the "ideas behind the music" – matters because of its incarnation in the music. Burkholder segregates the music from this volume, for consideration in a sequel. "Ideas" and music would have been better enmeshed from the start, spread over the two volumes, or one larger one. Though that would have been more difficult, it would have been nearer the knuckle, honest, and more "relevant" to the lion-like heart of the Ives experience.

Socialist Register 1985/86

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The poet and the city

John Gage

LINDSAY STANTON
Turner's Venice
Unnumbered pages, colour and black-and-white illustrations. British Museum Publications. £16.95.
07141 80629
JACK LINDSAY
Turner. The man and his art
179pp. Granada. £10.95 (paperback, £7.95).
0246 118989

The Clore Gallery on Millbank will be the first serious attempt to meet the terms of Turner's will and, appropriately enough, on the Thames, not far from his last home at Chelsea; as its opening approaches the pace of publication about him is likely to quicken. Lindsay Stanton and Jack Lindsay are in the vanguard, and understandably so, for the British Museum will soon lose its control of the drawings in the Turner Bequest, from which most of the fine plates in *Turner's Venice* have been selected, while *Turner: The man and his art* closes with a useful chapter on the history of the Bequest and the role of the Turner Society in agitating for the foundation of the new gallery.

Jack Lindsay's book is essentially a stream-

lined and updated version of the biography he published in 1966, which was then the first – as it is still the most comprehensive – attempt to re-create Turner's complex and enigmatic personality on the basis not simply of the biographical data and the paintings, but also on the evidence of the artist's mind in his extensive writing. Lindsay is a poet and the compiler of the only edition of Turner's poetry. As he writes in his new book, "Unless we see his ideas, the meanings of his pictures, as inseparable in the last resort from the aesthetic process, we cannot fully understand the latter." Purged as it is of notes and of the fascinating rag-bag of appendices which made the 1966 "Critical Biography" such compelling reading for the Turner enthusiast, this new book may risk being overlooked by a specialist audience, which would be a pity, for it incorporates a number of fresh and important observations on particular pictures, notably the "Undine" of 1846, which has never been so lucidly expounded, and the "Tapping the Furnace". Neither of them, however, has enjoyed much public reputation.

The general reader, though, will probably find Lindsay's congested and episodic style rather choppy going, and he will not be helped by a poverty of illustration and an exceptionally telegraphic bibliography. Lindsay has read

widely in the abundant recent literature, and it is merely unfortunate that he has built a whole (and stimulating) chapter around the popular "Music Party" without noticing that it has been moved from Petworth to East Cowes Castle. Turner now emerges as somewhat less radical than he was in 1966, and this is surely right: but Ruskin is dealt with less than justly, and the closing remarks on Turner's limited influence overlook the many signs of his impact on nineteenth-century artists from Havell and Bonington to Whistler and Watts. Lindsay has maintained the biographical emphasis of his earlier study, and his infrequent characterizations of the art are still rather more windy and vaporous than their subjects. None the less, *Turner: The man and his art* still provides the best introduction to Turner's character available at present.

Venice was the city for which Turner developed perhaps his most lasting affection, and we know that he was contemplating a third or fourth visit there as late as 1845. His response to it was the subject of an important book by A. J. Finberg more than fifty years ago, but Finberg did not make much use of the possibilities of cheap colour-reproduction, nor, more seriously, did he show a breadth of vision adequate to his theme. *Turner's Venice* has presumably been conceived primarily as a collection of splendid colour-plates, which Lindsay Stanton has embellished with some vigorous and sensitive commentaries; but she is also anxious to set the record straight on a number of teasing questions of chronology and meaning. One of the dating arguments, affecting a large body of watercolours and pencil sketches which have been variously given to the mid-1830s or to 1840, hinges on the presence or absence of scaffolding around the Campanile in St Mark's Square. Turner may not always have regarded such details as essential, but in two of the drawings where Stanton puzzlingly

denies its presence, it is clearly there, and does not raise our confidence that she can handle the important and difficult matter of Venetian topography. Turner's treatment of which she is perhaps too ready to characterize as imprecise. One drawing here, according to status of a capriccio is the most beautiful of 1819 watercolours, which has for some time gone under the mistaken title of "View Looking east from the Giudecca towards the towers and domes of St Mark's". The work of Turner's has a more authentic place and atmosphere, and the view is taken from near the east side of the Arsenal, looking towards the Fondamenta Nuova, the Vigna, Sta Giustina and SS Giovanni e Paolo to the left. Turner needed his topography to be fathomable, because it was closely related to his sense of history, which Stanton also rather less than its due. A traditional view of the painter was squashed by the associationist response, to places which happened to be beautiful, to allow aesthetic imperatives to assert themselves, and long time dying, yet it needs little reflection to see how improbable it is. Turner's passion for the grandiose architecture of Venice, which disturbed Ruskin and made both as a symbol of the imperial power of the Republic, and as a vehicle for the whiteness which the painter found so attractive in the city on the water. It is a pity that his notes to the plates, Lindsay Stanton has drawn more extensively on the many sketches in Turner's Venetian notebooks which might have provided a more solid basis for her views; on his attitude to the *Turner's Venice* does, however, set the artist's visual in a wider historical context, and his study in such studies, and it is worth a brief treatment of later nineteenth-century painters of the city.

Mexican no more

Graham Reynolds

DAVID BINDMAN (Editor)
The Thames and Hudson Encyclopaedia of British Art
320pp. Thames and Hudson. £10.50.
0300 234205

When Sir Joshua Reynolds addressed the students of the Royal Academy in 1788 he was prompted by Gainsborough's recent death to make a prediction about the future prospects of British painting. His forecast was not overconfident. He anticipated hostility and prejudice from other countries, and could only offer a conditional assurance of success. "If ever this nation should produce genius sufficient to acquire to us the honourable distinction of an English School", then, he thought, Gainsborough would be "among the first of that rising name". Two centuries later we can see that he was too cautious. An immense output, not always the product of genius but often protected by insular predilections from Continental influences, has indeed created an English School. In the same period a revolution in taste has pushed back the boundaries of definition: a thousand years, to the beginnings of Anglo-Saxon art. This is a reversal of eighteenth-century opinion that would have astonished Horace Walpole, who could hardly bear to contemplate any painting produced here before the reign of Henry VIII, and Constable, who regarded the Bayeux tapestry as "a Mexican performance". Now the abundance of monographs and exhibitions, and the amount of study devoted to every aspect from Pictish to performance art forces even the most ardent admirer to recognize that there are limits to the range of his knowledge.

This encyclopaedia will provide a guide through a labyrinth of artists, styles, media, exhibiting societies and kindred topics. Ample attention is paid to medieval art, under a sectional editor, Nigel Morgan. Obviously there are only a few identifiable artists, such as William de Brilles and John Siferwas, in this period. Its main aspects are covered in a number of general articles on Anglo-Saxon art, biblical illuminations, stained glass, alabasters,

vestments and cognate themes. The volume is beatified by the individual by the Renaissance ensures that there is a plentiful flow of names from the early centuries onwards. Brief entries for a considerable number of these artists are supplemented by clues on more general topics such as the Academy, the Craftybook Colony and the artistic Movement. The comparatively few articles on portrait painting and landscape painting provide scope for a brisk survey of these main trends in the history of art. There are entries for a few leading figures such as Richard Payne Knight and John Shanks, and on some writers, though the author of the first sustained survey of the subject, is somewhat ungenerously named in under Vertue's name. The *Survey* in course of miniature painting, which demonstrates the great importance of this painting has held here, more than any other national school. An appendix, in which Hermitage and the Hamburg Kunsthalle, impressively, gives a guide to collections of substantial holdings of British art.

It is customary to draw attention to omissions in reviewing an encyclopaedia. In this case, I should have expected to find John and Simeon Solomon in a work in which I am more disposed to commend the book than to find it lacking. The book has provided space for most of the names of the last century, and the models of concision and brevity have been by an impressive list of scholars, whose numbers show the extent of current knowledge of British art. They have been given a by their main editor, David Bindman, who has provided some idiosyncratic commentary. It is startling, for instance, to find an article on outdoor painting that does not continue this practice long. The sketches diligently in the open air, throughout his entire career. I have a number of judgments on the most developments will not stand the test of well as Reynolds's assessment, as thorough. But in the main this is a work within which it is pleasant as well as to acquire on almost everything in British art.

Mentor-protecting

Peter Loewenberg

JEFFREY MOUSSAIEFF MASSON (Editor and Compiler)
The Complete Letters of Sigmund Freud to Wilhelm Fliess 1887-1904
200pp. Harvard University Press. £19.95.
0674 154207

His relationship to Wilhelm Fliess was, as Ernest Jones said, "the only really extraordinary experience in Freud's life". Fliess, a Berlin gynaecologist two years his junior, was the most passionate, of Freud's friends; in particular, he supported Freud during the period of his self-analysis, 1896-99. The original 1950 edition of the correspondence between them omitted many letters and severely edited them, excluding important themes and details. This new edition presents Freud in a fuller, rather less idealized way: his human qualities and his achievements both greater and more understandable.

This edition also brings to the surface a number of issues: the reprehensible censorship of archival materials exercised by a small group of largely dead or supplanted guardians of the Freud papers; the validity of Jeffrey Masson's claim that Freud's assignment of centrality to the role of fantasy in his life is false; most important, this unique correspondence, in its fullness, permits us a rare insight into the delicate realm of Freud's creativity. Here we may be unobtrusive observers of the personal dynamics of one of the great acts of cultural creation in history as Freud produced what was to become a towering imaginative structure.

The letters were sold, in 1936, by Fliess's widow Ida to a Berlin dealer, Reinhold Stahl. At the time she stipulated that they should never be passed to Freud himself as she knew he would destroy them. Marjorie Bonaparte, a Freud disciple, bought the letters for £100. She showed them to Freud, who asked her to burn them. Instead, she deposited them in the Rothschild Bank in Vienna. After the Anschluss in 1938 she took them to Paris and in February 1941 deposited them with the Danish legation in Copenhagen.

After the war, they were taken to London and in 1950, Marie Bonaparte, Anna Freud and Ernst Kris published a selection of 168 of the 284 letters, many of them with substantial annotations. The screening and choice of letters were made by Anna Freud and Kris on the principle of

making public everything relating to the writer's scientific work and scientific interests and everything bearing on the social and political conditions in which psychoanalysis originated, and of omitting or obscuring everything publication of which would be inconsistent with professional or personal confidence.

While acknowledging the special place in psychoanalytic history of these first editors, it is less than admirable that a small, inevitably biased committee should decide what should or should not be published from a body of documents, and this in, of all disciplines, psychoanalysis, where the importance of the small, usually neglected, details is a therapeutic canon. Freud constructed a method based on the "fundamental rule" of full disclosure, and on the importance of paying close attention to and interpreting the smallest detail, no matter how irrelevant it appeared.

To make this point, Freud related the case of a high official who came to him for treatment and was bound by his position to hold back parts of state. Due to this reservation the treatment failed. Freud cautioned that if the

psychoanalyst permitted the analysand even one privileged area of secrecy, it would be like a sanctuary in a city where soon all the rabble and criminal elements would collect and find refuge for their nefarious activities. If there is a discipline that in its method and essence cannot countenance censorship, it is psychoanalysis. Yet the Sigmund Freud Archives at the Library of Congress contain sealed documents, many of which are not scheduled to be opened until after the year 2000. One letter by Josef Breuer is sealed until 2102 – another 116 years.

The most striking feature of the new letters and restored excisions is the depth of Freud's dependency on and submission to Fliess, to his person and his ideas. This was a heated, full-blown transference during the most poignant period of Freud's self-analysis.

Your praise is nectar and ambrosia for me... [July 14, 1894]. You would be the strongest of men, holding in your hands the reins of sexuality, which governs all mankind; you could do anything and prevent anything... [June 22, 1895]. How much I owe you: solace, understanding, stimulation in my loneliness, meaning to my life that I gained through you, and finally even health that no one else could have given back to me... [January 1, 1896] You must reveal to me the secrets of the world of lower animals and the world of children. I have never before felt so stupidly expectant in the face of your disclosures. [June 22, 1897].

Freud, who had no psychoanalyst of his own, chose for his confidant not a Viennese but a Berliner. This is our good fortune. Had these two friends frequented Viennese cafés, taken walks together, or used the telephone, this precious record of Freud's self-analysis would be lost.

The space Freud shaped between himself and Fliess was an arena where he could be creative yet shielded from direct exposure to the harsh world outside – which would assail him and his manuscript soon enough. This was the space in which his new ideas were hatched, here he had a feeling of confidence that the delicate discoveries of his inner life would be sheltered. In the relationship with Fliess, Freud protected an intermediate area of experience, between his subjective exploration and the shared reality of science and culture. Fliess was not a systematic recorder for posterity; this correspondence was never intended to be published. It has the pungency of spontaneity, intimacy, and process. Freud saw Fliess as the greater man – the genius. He was Freud's mirror – he was invited to share in the explorer's grandiose inner experience, his pain and doubt during his self-scrutiny, and to confirm a unique subjective discovery. Only to Fliess could he write out his fantasy of glory:

Do you suppose that someday one will read on a marble tablet on this house:
Here, on July 24, 1895 the secret of the dream revealed itself to Dr. Sigm. Freud.
So far there is little prospect of it. [June 12, 1900].

Another revelation is the depth of Freud's ambivalence towards his friends Oscar Rie and Josef Breuer. The close network of affection, jealousies and animosities in the Freud-Fliess circle had its influence on the earlier editing and publication of this correspondence. To please Fliess, Freud frequently engaged in back-biting against his tarot-playing friend and house pediatrician, Oscar Rie, who also treated Freud's sister-in-law, Minna. Rie was Fliess's brother-in-law. He and his wife Malenie had a daughter, Marienne, who married Ernst Kris, one of the first editors, so making her the niece of Mrs Ida Fliess. Hence perhaps the removal of the Rie family material from the first edition of the letters.

Fliess also disliked the prominent Viennese neurologist, Josef Breuer, who was his critic,

but also Freud's early patron and benefactor. This may explain Freud's gratuitous meanness toward Breuer:

Breuer is an obstacle to my professional progress in Vienna. [September 29, 1893]. I simply can no longer get along with Breuer at all; what I had to take in the way of bad treatment and weakness of judgment that is none the less ingenious during the past months finally deadened me, internally, to the loss. [February 6, 1896]

Breuer had loaned Freud money in his student days. In 1898, Freud still owed him 2,300 florins. He repaid a first instalment of 500 florins, but Breuer returned 350 of them to Freud's wife, saying that this was compensation for a relative of his whom Freud had treated and undischarged. Freud was ungracious and proudly rejected Breuer's generous action.

Freud was plagued by a mysterious cardiac condition, "the most violent arrhythmia, constant tension, pressure, burning in the heart region; shooting pains down my left arm; some dyspnea, all of it essentially in attacks extending continuously over two-thirds of the day". He was justifiably suspicious of the lies and dissimulations of his friends, Breuer and Fliess, who were also his doctors: "On the whole I notice that I am being treated like a patient, with evasion and subterfuge, instead of having my mind set at ease by being told everything there is to tell me in a situation of this kind; that is to say, whatever is known." [June 22, 1894]. Freud wished to have full knowledge of his medical condition, the degree of danger, his possible future. He pleaded with Fliess for the facts:

I assume that you want to conceal the true state of affairs from me; and beg you not to do this. If you can say something definite, just tell me. I have no exaggerated opinion either of my responsibility and shall endure with great dignity the uncertainty and the shortened life expectancy connected with a diagnosis of myocarditis; on the contrary, I might even benefit from it in arranging the remainder of my life and enjoying fully what is left to me. [April 19, 1894].

This appeal for medical honesty he maintained all his life. It anticipates his rage in 1923 when his colleagues on the "Committee", and his then physician, Felix Deutsch, withheld the diagnosis of cancer from him. When told of the deception, Freud asked, with blazing eyes: "Mit welchem Recht?" With what right did his doctor and colleagues lie to him? In his relationship with Fliess he charges:

The art of deceiving a patient is certainly not very necessary. But what has the individual come to, how negligible must be the influence of the religion of science, which is supposed to have taken the place of the old religion, if one no longer dares to disclose that it is this or that man's turn to die? [February 6, 1899].

When he engaged Max Schur as his personal physician in 1929 he insisted not only that he should always be told the full truth, but he also drew up a euthanasia pact which Schur deemed in London in 1939. When, as pledged, he ended Freud's life mercifully after a sixteen-year struggle with cancer of the upper palate.

One can only be moved as Freud, the man who defined control of our impulses as one of the criteria of maturity, fights his addiction to nicotine. Fliess, who was a nose and throat specialist, twice operated on Freud's nose and ordered him to stop smoking. Freud usually smoked twenty cigars a day, and the fight to give up tobacco was a battle for self-mastery in which his desperate need for it prevailed:

"Today" I started to restrict my smoking – that is to say, to reduce the continual smoking to a discontinuous, countable amount... I believe you are fulfilling your medical duty; I shall say nothing more about it and shall obey partially (but not wisely).

Two cigars a day – thereby one recognizes the non-smoker! [December 11, 1893].

Can we say that Freud is diminished because we can see that he was struggling with depression? Why else was this letter withheld in the first edition? His efforts to comply with the orders of his physician were followed by humiliating relapses. Cigars were his antidote, and he was filled with contrition and guilt at his failure to give them up:

I have not smoked for seven weeks, since the day of your prohibition. At first I felt, as expected, outrageously bad. Cardiac symptoms accompanied by mild depression, as well as the horrible misery of abstinence. The latter wore off after approximately three weeks, the former abated after about five weeks, but it left me completely incapable of working, a beaten man. After seven weeks, despite my promise to you, I began smoking again... [June 22, 1894]. Since your letter of Thursday a fortnight ago, abstinence, which lasted eight days on the following Thursday, in an indescribably bleak moment, one cigar; then again eight days abstinence; the following Thursday one more, since then peace. In brief, a pattern has established itself – one cigar a week to commemorate your letter, which once again robbed me of my enjoyment of tobacco. [July 14, 1894]. The abstinence does me good; I oscillate between one and four [cigars] a day. [December 4, 1896].

Where his work was concerned, Freud identified himself with Fliess devotedly: "Your triumph will ultimately be in some measure mine, because my judgment followed you and your works." (October 4, 1899). Fliess was Freud's first reader, the person to whom he displayed his new ideas when they were still very much a part of himself. He puts it precisely in a letter: "You accurately describe the painful feeling of parting with something which has been one's very own." (October 4, 1899). To get a first reaction while the manuscript of *Die Traumdeutung* was still being produced was vital to his creative process. He required the appropriate mixture of support and criticism. This was the fragile period of production after gestation when both Freud and his manuscript were most vulnerable. He had not yet attained the perspective he would have a few years after publication, when he could look at his work with detachment, when the distinction between self and work had been secured.

Freud submitted his page proofs to Fliess for approval. When Fliess objected, Freud deleted a favourite dream, "the big dream that you eliminated" as he called it, the only dream that he analysed in full. It is lost to us forever, and Freud grieves for it:

So the dream is condemned. Now that sentence has been passed, however, I would like to shed a tear over it and confess that I regret it and that I have no hopes of finding a better one as a substitute. As you know, a beautiful dream and no indiscretion – do not coincide. [June 9, 1898]. I have not yet ceased mourning the lost dream. [June 20, 1898]. The loss of the big dream that you eliminated is to be compensated for by the insertion of a small collection of dreams... [August 1, 1899].

In his creative phase Freud was uncertain of the value of his work. "If only someone could tell me whether there is any real value to the whole thing!" (September 6, 1899). He craved Fliess's encouragement: "I do not find it unpleasant to have someone who has a word of praise where it is appropriate instead of invariably telling one the most unpleasant things." (September 27, 1899). He refers to Fliess as "standing godfather" to his work. When, in 1901, Freud freed himself of his dependence on Fliess, it was with a mixture of regret and longing. He was, he says, sorry to lose his "only audience". "For whom do I still write?" (September 19, 1901).

In *The Assault on Truth: Freud's suppression of the seduction theory* (reviewed in the TLS,

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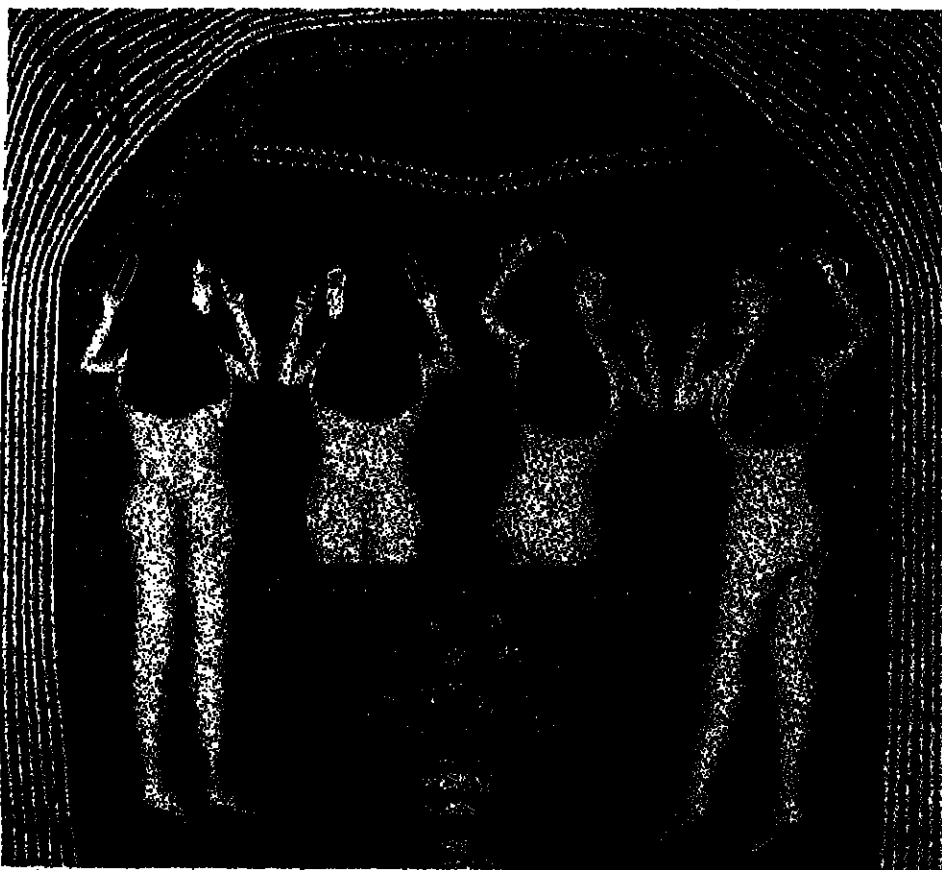
ANTHONY KENNY
The Ivory Tower: Essays in philosophy and public policy
137pp. Oxford: Blackwell. £15.
0631 139850

Is nuclear deterrence morally defensible? One line of argument against it goes as follows. Many of the weapons in our deterrent arsenal are aimed at cities, so that if used their effect would be to kill millions of civilians instantaneously and condemn millions of others to a lingering death or an even worse life in the aftermath of a holocaust. Since most of those who would be killed are innocent (not in the sense of having led blameless lives but in the sense of posing no threat to those who killed them), the use of these weapons would be the gravest moral wrong – that of deliberately slaughtering the innocent. Now, if it is wrong to do something, it is surely wrong to threaten to do that thing. So our strategy of nuclear deterrence, involving as it does an implicit threat to massacre the inhabitants of Soviet cities, in certain circumstances, cannot be morally justified.

This argument is developed forcefully in a number of the articles reprinted in Anthony Kenny's collection *The Ivory Tower*. (The second half of the book is entirely devoted to philosophical reflection on the ethics of war.) It relies on two crucial points. First, there is the argument that, if doing X is wrong, then threatening to do X is wrong. Kenny thinks this holds, not in virtue of the sort of speech-act threatening is, but, more convincingly, in virtue of the sort of intentions those who want their threats taken seriously must have: "Everyone involved in the military chain of command from the top downwards must be prepared to give or execute the order to massacre millions of non-combatants if ever the government decides that that is what is to be done." Of course the willingness to murder is reluctant and conditional; but willingness (indeed training and a high state of readiness) there must be, in order for the murderous threat to be effective. The second crucial point is the assumption that it is wrong in all circum-

stances to kill or hold oneself willing to kill the innocent. I guess that if there are to be any moral absolutes, this is a good candidate, but a utilitarian might insist that even murdering the innocent could be justified to avoid a greater number of innocent deaths. Kenny denies that we in fact face this option; the very worst choice we face would be between killing the innocent and submitting to communist rule or Soviet blackmail. But suppose he is wrong about that: would we be justified in threatening to use our missiles if that were the only way to deter nuclear attack? Anyone who thinks we would not must be able to point to a morally relevant difference between killing X and failing to save Y from a death which is not itself one's doing. An appeal to the law of God along the lines of the earliest of the articles published

here will not do: God's laws are not arbitrary, and a reason for thinking there is no moral difference is a reason for thinking the theologians who place any weight on this distinction in their interpretation of God's law have got it wrong. The only plausible difference that has been suggested in the philosophical literature (by Thomas Nagel and others) is that the action of killing – and indeed threatening to kill – involves aiming at evil and therefore having one's action guided by evil; and that this is true even when one pursues the evil of killing only as a means to the prevention of some greater harm. Failing to save an innocent from such an attack does not involve the orientation of human intentionality to evil in this way, though of course it may be culpable for other reasons. Kenny himself does not pursue this line of



Morris Hirshfeld's "Two Women in Front of a Mirror" (1943) is reproduced from Peggy Guggenheim Collection, Venice; The Solomon R. Guggenheim Foundation by Angelica Zander Lidenstam (912pp with 698 black-and-white and 96 colour illustrations. New York: Abrams. \$85. 08109 0989 8).

Into the beyond

David E. Cooper

HILARY LAWSON
Reflexivity: The post-modern predicament
132pp. Hutchinson. Paperback. £5.50.
009 1608619

This book is one in a series with the laudable aim of introducing important concepts and figures in recent Continental thought to readers whose background is in analytic philosophy. Reflexivity is characterized at the outset in two ways, though the distinction is often forgotten in the bulk of the book. It is, first, "a form of self-awareness" by philosophers of their own activities; and, second, the feature of claims, like "This sentence is false", whose truth implies their falsity or absurdity. Philosophers' self-awareness can indeed be induced by the seemingly paradoxical nature of claims they make. One thinks, for instance, of the Principle of Verifiability's apparent violation of the criterion it lays down. Hilary Lawson's special concern is with reflexivity as discussed and manifested in the writings of Nietzsche, Heidegger and Derrida. It is not transparent why these three are chosen, aside from their being paradigmatically "Continental"; but Lawson thinks they have at least the following in common: an especially acute ear for reflexive problems in philosophical writings, including their own; a sense that the fundamental reflexive problem is that of the philosopher's "entanglement" in the language he needs to use; the alleged virtue of "harnessing" and "using" reflexivity, instead of avoiding or dissolving it; and a millenarian intimation of a "post-modern" age – a "beyond" – in which all past philosophy, their own included, will have

"deconstructed" itself under the pressure of its reflexivity.

The chapters devoted to the trio have a common shape. An account of how the thinker attacks other writers for their paradoxes is followed by a description of how he then recognizes and responds to the reflexive nature of his own thought. The dominant figure is Derrida. Not only is the terminology throughout his, but the other members of the trio are read through his eyes. This is unfortunate since, especially in the case of Nietzsche, Lawson's account reproduces Derrida's parody. Nietzsche is represented as a total sceptic and relativist, but he is neither of these. He does not doubt the availability of knowledge and truth; rather, such notions are absurd when understood in terms of a relation to an imagined "real" world that transcends how we speak and conceive. Understood properly, however – in pragmatic terms, that is – knowledge and truth are not only available, but necessary for existence. Nor is Nietzsche a moral relativist, arguing on the contrary that all systems of evaluation deserving the name "moral" must be essentially similar – which is why "the higher man" needs to go "beyond" morality. Since Nietzsche is not embroiled in the reflexive paradoxes Lawson thinks, the account of how he "responds" to them – through an alleged indulgence in "anarchic assertion" of competing claims, none of which is supposed to "stand" – is nugatory. It is also an insulting thing to say of the philosopher who regarded it a "conspicuous" abdication of "the intellectual conscience" to hold anything without "first having given an account of the final and most certain reasons pro and con".

Heidegger fares little better, for while the section on his later writings is as opaque as they are, the exposition of *Being and Time* is marred

by serious mistakes. In particular Lawson inexcusably equates Heidegger's ontic/ontological distinction with that between presence-at-hand and readiness-to-hand and, even worse, with one between the "common sense, everyday" world and "the world of Being". Heidegger is quite explicit that Being-present-at-hand is an ontological characteristic; and a nuclear physicist, though giving ontic descriptions, is clearly not describing the world of common sense. Lawson is better in his account of Derrida's critique of Husserlian meanings, the "given", and the "metaphysics of presence" – though what it unintentionally reveals is that one reason why Derrida has made only a small splash among analytic philosophers is that much of his critique is overfamiliar to readers of Wittgenstein, Sellars and Quine. The description of Derrida's "positive" views – of *différance*, *traces*, etc. – is too close to Derrida's own exposition to convert those who suspect that this part of Derrida is the work of a fraud or clown. It is not helpful to be told, for example, that *différance* is "not a further presence that lies behind presence and absence, but a non-originary origin that enables presence and non-presence to occur".

Lawson does not, then, provide illuminating, or even safe, accounts of his chosen trio. Nor does he seriously get to grips with his chosen topics. To begin with, the supposed reflexive paradoxes remain undescribed. A claim like "The limits of language are the limits of my world" requires interpretation and a sorting of various possible senses, and not the bland assumption that it is "self-deconstructing". The author is insensitive, moreover, to the variety of difficulties to be found among problems of a broadly reflexive kind. Thus it is surely wrong to hold that Wittgenstein's claim about the limits of language is "like the liar

argument; if there is a fault in the book almost all of the articles leave the foundations of his view unexplored, but nevertheless make it admirably clear how considerations like this fit into the complex debate about nuclear policy.

The articles in the first half of the book concern murder in a somewhat different set of considerations, of intention, responsibility and psychiatric expertise in criminal law. But though the context is different, the approach is the same. The recent case of the South Wales miners, convicted initially of dereliction for dropping a block of polystyrene on a fatally injured driver, raises questions about the state of mind that must exist before conviction for murder can be justified. Is the intention to kill? Or is the intention to cause grievous injury sufficient? Kenny does examine the miners' case, but in his discussion of the House of Lords decision in *Hyam* he argues again that it is willingness to kill, rather than the direct intention to kill or the intention to create a serious risk of death, that is crucial to the specific wrongness of murder. Unfortunately, Kenny's formula does quite cover the case of the person who shoots an aircraft in flight purely in order to obtain insurance money on the aircraft. Though the deaths of the passengers would be a foreseeable result, it is not his intention to kill them, nor does he create the risk of their death. (He is not someone who sets out to create a risk of death as part of a terrorizing strategy.) To this case, Kenny says that "the least that should be taken to include the (direct) intention to bring about a state of affairs from which knows death will certainly follow". But he does not defend this claim, or make clear how case differs morally. (I know it differs from that of a man who simply waits patiently) away from a dying person who alone could save, knowing that the death of that person will certainly follow.

As an epilogue, Kenny includes a lecture delivered at the University of Cape Town in 1984 on the subject of academic freedom. There is not space to discuss the argument of this piece in detail. Suffice it to say that it should be required reading for all those who believe that threats to academic freedom posed only by persons and institutions outside universities.

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Many-headed history

Geoffrey Griffin

E. EASTERLING and B. M. W. KNOX (Editors)
The Cambridge History of Classical Literature
Volume One: Greek Literature
Cambridge University Press. £47.50.
0521 210429

The *Cambridge History of Classical Literature* had a long and difficult gestation. The second volume, on Latin literature, appeared in reverse order, Homer-fashion, in 1982. The editors of the present book "thank the contributors most warmly for their patience in the face of frustrating delays". One of their writers of this piece with the footnote, poignant in its understated pathos, "This chapter was written in 1974. Scholars writing from North America are notably more numerous than in the Latin world, producing about half the book. That either the direct intention to kill or the intention to create a serious risk of death is crucial to the specific wrongness of murder. Unfortunately, Kenny's formula does quite cover the case of the person who shoots an aircraft in flight purely in order to obtain insurance money on the aircraft. Though the deaths of the passengers would be a foreseeable result, it is not his intention to kill them, nor does he create the risk of their death. (He is not someone who sets out to create a risk of death as part of a terrorizing strategy.) To this case, Kenny says that "the least that should be taken to include the (direct) intention to bring about a state of affairs from which knows death will certainly follow". But he does not defend this claim, or make clear how case differs morally. (I know it differs from that of a man who simply waits patiently) away from a dying person who alone could save, knowing that the death of that person will certainly follow.

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Moderately obvious

Frederic J. Saunders

VON LEYDEN
Political Equality and Justice: His political thought
D. P. Macmillan, in association with the
London School of Economics, £25.
0252 28152

R. Dods once remarked that if the love and knowledge of Greek literature were ever to die in this country it would be because they had been suffocated by the industry of its exponents. W. von Leyden devotes a book of 145 pages to a close analysis of a topic which crops up in an explicit form in only a handful of Aristotle's *Politics* and *Ethics*.

Very much so; for the problem of reconciling equality and justice is among the knottiest in political theory and practice. Both Plato and Aristotle were exercised by it, and had strong views on one crucial point: we should refuse to say truck with crude "arithmetical" equality, where each man counts for no more than his fellow – "one man, one vote", as we say. (Von Leyden analyses this Rorty remark, they seem to need no more tradition they purport to transcend. Heidegger is the question of philosophical reflection. The philosophical claims that are all too often yet seemingly self-defeating, is an analysis which has generally been regarded as guilty (by Wittgenstein at the end of the *Tractatus*, for instance, or by Popper in the *Principle of Verifiability*). By following the positions of Nietzsche, Heidegger, Derrida, and by failing to engage with the question of philosophical reflection, Lawson fails to honour the immense series to which his book belongs.

need their to treat men unequally; we need to treat them fairly. But the criteria are complex. Faced with the immense variety of interrelated occupations and functions the political theorist hungers for criteria

and large, listed. Sometimes the bulk of it is oppressive, and many readers will wish that they had been given some guidance among the books and articles named, even at the cost of reducing their quantity. The bibliography on the Presocratic opens with a dispassionate listing of twenty-five general books about them; that on Tragedy runs to fourteen large and closely packed pages. Are all these works, the reader wonders, presented as being of identical interest and quality?

The editors do not say how they define literature. A certain romanticism is detectable, inclining to favour poetry at the expense of prose, lyric at the expense of other forms of poetry, and (perhaps) the fragmentary at the expense of the completely preserved. Early lyric and elegiac poetry, extant almost wholly in fragments, is lovingly treated – 130 pages, and lavish quotations in Greek as well as English. These chapters (J. P. Barron and P. E. Easterling on Archilochus; B. M. W. Knox on Theognis and Solon; Charles Segal on choral lyric; David A. Campbell on monody) add up by themselves to an important book. It is a special bonus that they contain the original and translations of recently discovered poems by Archilochus and Stesichorus. Yet even here it is striking that Pindar, the one great poet whose work survives extensively, receives far less space than Alcman or Stesichorus, of whom we have so much less: nine pages on Pindar, but on Alcman seventeen. That does not, surely, correspond to their relative importance, whether to antiquity, to later European literature, or to us.

Literature has evidently not much to do with ideas. All the chapters on philosophy are short and squeezed. Plotinus, the greatest philosopher of late antiquity, is polished off in one page (the sordid poet Hipponax, of whom we have a few cryptic and indecent scraps, gets seven), and Plato has to be compressed into seventeen, the same allocation as Alcman. The chapter opens:

To treat of Plato as a writer without mentioning his philosophy would be as helpful as to describe a lion by an account of its skin. Yet his philosophy cannot be reduced to a few paragraphs, all for which this book could have room. So what will be said of it will

be simplified and selective, the minimum needed to explain the form and nature of his writings . . .

The implications are considerable, and Plato, so treated, cuts a poor figure. It is a striking example of this approach that A. W. Bulloch can find it natural to write, of the *Aetia* of Callimachus, that "it is hardly too much to say that the *Aetia* is second in historical importance only to the Homeric poems". Naturally one has to have ruled out Plato and Aristotle before one can say something like that. Callimachus, in fact, gets twenty-two pages, and highly encomiastic ones: he is praised as "an outstanding intellect" with "a penetrating intelligence", whose poems show not only "stunning narrative power" but also "moral seriousness", dealing with "serious and at times disturbing issues". The treatment of this poet contains good things, but its tone seems decidedly odd. Callimachus, though learned and talented, was in important ways a frivolous writer, and it is a strange conception of literature which heaps such praise on him. What superlatives are left for Plato or Aristotle, who really do possess such qualities? In this book there is not even room to mention "Platonic love" or Plato's hostility to poetry.

Plutarch is another writer whose treatment is stepmotherly. Four pages is an inadequate allowance for one of the most important, as well as one of the most voluminous, of ancient writers. Less than a page on the *Lives*! The book is actually more interested in Isocrates (four and a half pages), who is discussed without a hint that he is one of the great bores of history. Minor prose writers, too, are treated on a scale very different from that which is applied to minor writers of verse. The Presocratic philosophers are despatched so summarily that the Milesians fall through the net, and allusions later in the book to Thales hang in the air. The Hippocratic medical works barely rate a mention, despite their interest for the history of ideas as well as the development of the language.

Homer is well handled by G. S. Kirk, who is especially interesting on the *Odyssey*. Lyric, as we have seen, comes off very handsomely. The major writers of the fifth century are generally well done, too. There is a general piece on

Tragedy in Performance by John Gould; Aeschylus is treated by R. P. Winnington-Ingram, Sophocles by P. E. Easterling, Euripides by B. M. W. Knox. E. W. Handley writes on Comedy, and Henry R. Immerwahr on Herodotus and Thucydides. Reviewers of the Latin volume criticized its chronological eccentricities – Pliny the Younger before Pliny the Elder, and Latin literature coming to an end with Apuleius, "an aesthetic rather than a historical decision by the Editor". This volume repeats that "for the literary critic the historical questions are not the most important ones", but it does not give the same impression of disregard for temporal succession or historical context.

The treatment of Tragedy is to some extent an unexplained exception to the view that historical questions are not very important. We find again the familiar struggle to make sense of the peculiarly unknowable prehistory of the form, with horse-tailed satyrs, Arion and his dithyrambs, and the dispiriting announcement that "the evidence of Aristotle's *Poetics* is not lightly to be disregarded". O for the courage to disregard it! We also get the usual lecture on the height of the buskins worn by actors in the fifth century (not so lofty as some suppose), and the statement that we must ask just how the plays were originally put on, "or else the texts of Greek tragedy must remain inert . . . For the texts are essentially scripts for performance, and the style and context of that performance are fundamental to our understanding of the texts themselves". But then, the Theatre is different, a no-go area for the agents of literary theory.

Late writers also, on the whole, are well dealt with. The most striking contradiction between contributors comes here, on the respective merits of late writers of prose. G. W. Bowersock, the most elegant stylist among the contributors ("Goats appear to arouse his deepest emotions", he says of the poet Oppian), takes the line of the respectable in antiquity, preferring the unremitting seriousness of Aelius Aristides and his kind to the levity of Lucian: "Viewed as a whole, the achievement of Aristides is prodigious . . . The modern admiration for Lucian, often coupled with denigration of Aristides and his imitators, is a grave impediment to the understanding of Greek literature under Rome and Byzantium." Ten pages later E. L. Bowie reports that "Lucian's works seem at first sight to come from a different world from other *belles lettres*, just as they indisputably outclass them in quality." He goes on to contrast Lucian with the "pretentious shallowness" of the sophists – including Aristides. The reader laughs; and laughs are not too numerous in a book like this. But a question lingers: If literary history is being written in so frankly subjective a spirit – if, perhaps, it is inevitably so subjective – is there not something a little suspicious in presenting it in two stately volumes with the style, and to a great extent with the contents, of a work of reference?

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Igor Hajek

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War with the Newts
Translated by Ewald Osers
241pp. Allen and Unwin. Paperback, £2.95.
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VLADIMÍR PÁRAL
Válka s mnohozvrstetem
319pp. Československý spisovatel. Kčs 35.

In an age when robots have passed from futuristic fiction into everyday reality, the man who coined the term is remembered more for that single word than for the hundreds of thousands of other words he wrote. Between the wars Karel Čapek was Czechoslovakia's best known author and virtually all that he published was translated into English. But the passage of time has inevitably affected both his popularity abroad and his work itself. His fiction, strongly influenced by relativism and pragmatism, may appear slightly old-fashioned. Even more dated, alas, seem to be the ideals of tolerance, decency and respect for our fellow beings, human as well as animal, with which it is imbued.

The fact that most of the translations of Čapek's work are by now about fifty years old has not helped. Even the play *R. U. R.* (*Rossum's Universal Robots*) exists in English only in a version adapted to the theatrical tastes and production requirements of the 1920s. More resilient, however, has proved to be a novel often dismissed as journalistic by those who approach Čapek's work from a purely aesthetic

point of view. *War with the Newts* has long been adopted by science fiction followers as a classic, and it is no doubt due to their continued interest that, unlike most of his other books, it has frequently been reprinted, particularly in the United States. Of the two editions under review, that published by Northwestern is yet another reprint of the 1937 English translation, while the Allen and Unwin edition is a new translation by Ewald Osers. Except for one or two small hiccups this is wonderfully smooth; indeed, it reads almost better than the Czech original which is beginning to show its age, and should give the novel a new lease of life. Less successful is the garish cover, which portrays the newts in complete disregard of the author's own description of them. It is a pity too that most of the typographical jokes that were meant to support the impression that the book was a factual reportage from the future have been omitted.

The fact that this new translation has been included in an SF series may be slightly misleading. As Ivan Klima points out in his comprehensive introduction to the American reprint, Čapek turned to science fiction whenever he wanted to pursue a challenging theme. *War with the Newts* was, according to its author, inspired by a passing thought: "You must not think that the evolution that gave rise to us was the only evolutionary possibility on this planet." But the turning of this idea into a novel was influenced by the precarious state of the world in 1935 as well as by Čapek's constant concern that man's insatiable thirst for knowledge combined with his ethical apathy may prove self-destructive.

In the first two-thirds of the novel the story of the discovery of a species of antediluvian newts which have an extraordinary capacity for learning, and of their subsequent exploitation as

cheap labour for underwater construction, is treated wittily and satirically. Rather than a study of the newts themselves, we are given an analysis, still topical today, of human behaviour, both individual and social, of the greed, hypocrisy and ineradicable stupidity that characterize the human race. Things take a sinister turn only in the third part of the book when the billions of fast-proliferating newts organize themselves and start rebuilding the planet. They do so without displaying any direct hostility to humans; in fact, they need people to supply them with the tools and explosives they use to construct life-supporting shallow out of the existing continents. Mankind receives a generous offer, in return for its co-operation: "You will work with us on the demolition of your world." And as the newts can afford to pay well out of the riches of the oceans, the offer is taken up by many.

Klima observes that in some countries, notably Czechoslovakia and the Soviet Union, the overall meaning of the novel is simplified by the identification of the newts with the Nazis. This identification is supported by Čapek's allusion to the origins of the Chief Salamander: he is rumoured to be human and his background is conspicuously similar to that of Adolf Hitler. It is true that Čapek viewed with suspicion all absolutist ideologies and universalist movements, and he could hardly not have noticed what was then going on in Germany, less than a hundred miles from where he was writing. However, to reduce the novel to an allegory turns it from a philosophical into a merely political one. The newts, adaptable, clever and mass-oriented beings without art, a sense of history or any conscience, do not differ much from the dehumanized products of civilization who live among us in various disguises: as media intellectuals, fanatical terrorists or

mindless hooligans. They represent the dark side of human nature, with its boundless inventiveness in finding ways to destroy, and its inability to learn from self-induced disaster.

Perdidisti utilitatem calamitatis is, appropriately enough, also the theme of Vladimir Páral's new novel, *Válka s mnohozvrstetem* (War with the Multibeast), which is dedicated "with humility and love" to the memory of Karel Čapek. Páral, possibly the best and certainly the most popular writer living in Czechoslovakia today, has set his story once again in the north Bohemian city of Ústí nad Labem, scenes for most of his novels. This time the enemy is entirely man-made: pollution of the environment. Having reached a certain density, the pollution begins to behave like a primitive organism. At first it forms a cover of thick smog stretching over most of the lowlands of Europe; in the second phase large blocks of matter in the shape of giant seals or, significantly, newts, endowed with a collective intelligence, begin to attack people in their search for growth and humidity. The only remedy is to stop all the processes that cause pollution. But the battle is not won even after the onslaught has been repulsed. The plankton left by the pollution turns out to be a temporary drug with particular effects: it brings out all people's latent dehumanizing qualities—indulgence, hedonism, laziness.

Páral concentrates more than Čapek on the ethical aspects of contemporary life and illustrates his thesis by means of individuals rather than by the behaviour of states and nations. The novel displays the energy and wit typical of most of his work, but it is less like the message which he is attempting to convey, this remarkable writer is forced again to meet with a total lack of interest at least from British publishers.

one character, an endearingly helpful one, is carried from one environment to another. Words and phrases have a magic of their own, riddles have to be answered, and this is interpreted, while at one stage a poem by Robert Pinsky's collection *History of the Heart* has to be completed.

Themes and images are combined to an unusual extent: the name of the rock group "Tyranny and the Senses"; the frozen wasteland of the generalissimo's prison-camp are behind the door which is opened by the word "Tyranny"; escape from them involves freeing a fountain and a soldier turned to stone from the sword-and-sorcery world of Tolkien since been hyped flat, and Pinsky wisely gone to the springs of his own imagination to create new mythical worlds. The compulsion to get to the goal, to conquer all adventure games, is so strong as to blind the user to the richness of verbal texture, to the vividness of incident and the overall impact of the adventure very much depends on the individual adventurer.

Journals received

Fiction

Modern Fiction Studies
Volume 31, No 3; Autumn 1985
\$12 per year. Department of English, Purdue University, West Lafayette, Indiana 47907.

The first issue of *Modern Fiction Studies*, published thirty years ago, concentrated on Joseph Conrad, and that for autumn 1985 is also a Special Issue, devoted to Sinclair Lewis. Celebrating the hundredth anniversary of Lewis's birth, it reminds us, too, that sixty-five years ago *Main Street* was first published; it is fifty-five years since Lewis became the first American recipient of the Nobel Prize for literature, and thirty-four since his death. Moreover, while Lewis's best writing, the 1920s novels *Main Street*, *Rabbit*, *Arrowsmith*, *Elmer Gantry* and *Dodsworth*, remain cheaply available in Signet paperbacks, an editorial preface points out that the number of publications on Lewis has fallen significantly in the past decade.

This is a changed cultural climate for a writer who, his biographer, Mark Schorer, claimed, "unquestionably helped us into the imagination of ourselves as did no other writer of the 1920s." And while it should be said at once that this commemorative issue does not by a long way represent the best of which *MFS* is demonstrably capable, there are useful illuminations scattered in its pages, and two pieces which must be exempted from the general judgment.

The first of these is the essay printed last year, Roger Forseth's examination of Lewis's ultimately fatal alcoholism. "Over the years the American literary scene has, of course, been suffused with alcohol," but Forseth's undertaking is the difficult examination of the complex relationship between chronic alcoholism and literary art. Lewis's "obsessive and unresolved rage against women" is proposed as one element in the problem. That this conflicts with the tone of Bea Knodel's discussion of Lewis's fictional treatment of American marriage—"he pictures with feeling the humiliation of the woman totally dependent on her husband for money"—is evidence either of a commendably permissive editorial policy or of critical uncertainty.

Essays variously relate Sinclair Lewis to H.G. Wells, chart his indebtedness to Edith Wharton, his effect upon Nella Larsen's *Quicksand*, and his fascination with the figure of Sherlock Holmes. These are balanced by a fuller reading of *Dodsworth* and also one of *Main Street* as "Lewis's allegory of pioneers and land speculators." But R.A. Davidson's brief presentation of hitherto unpublished letters of early friendship between young "Red" Lewis and Charles and Kathleen Norris is a delightful bonus. An appendix of recent Lewis criticism reminds us that there has been no attempt to collect the Lewis correspondence since; when this is done; Davidson's contribution will receive due recognition.

Colin Nicholson

Drama

Modern Drama
Volume XXVIII, No 1
\$14.50 per year. University of Toronto Press, 5201 Dufferin Street, Downsview, Ontario, Canada M3H 5T8.

The quarterly *Modern Drama* claims to be "the only journal focusing exclusively on world drama from 1850 to the present." Most issues are wide-ranging, and its eclecticism makes for an interesting juxtaposition. Articles on French feminist theatre, for example, and on the relation of genre to feminine consciousness have appeared beside an impressively reasoned reassessment of A. Doll's *House* in which Austin B. Quigley shows at work in the play itself the view of the women's rights movement as "a problem of mankind in general."

Modern Drama's March 1985 issue, Volume XXVIII, No 1, is one of its annual special numbers, focusing in this case on "Modern Drama and the Media." Christopher C. Hudgins' article is especially useful in showing how Páral's drama exploits subjective perspectives

offered by camera and microphone, and Martin Esslin likewise analyses concisely how conditions within the media affect the visions of playwrights in Britain. Elsewhere, some discussions of relations between stage, screen and radio would benefit from more of the theoretical rigour Benjamin K. Bennett offers in his opening essay. More constant attention to his reminder of "the ontological defectiveness of the dramatic text as merely written or printed and merely read or heard" might also further improve the varied, though generally high, quality of *Modern Drama's* surveys and analyses.

Randall Stevenson

History

The Journal of Modern History
Volume 57, No 3; September 1985
\$27 per year. University of Chicago, Illinois, USA.

This journal has been in existence since 1928. It is well established as one of the world's leading historical reviews, specializing mainly in modern European history from the eighteenth century onwards (although it has had some notable contributions on earlier periods). The pattern is that each number has about three longish articles, often followed by a long review article or two, and then by a large number of book reviews which never fall into the category of the short notice. The *Journal of Modern History* has a style of its own, one that is direct, informative, unpretentious and generous. It is much valued.

An issue which well represents its quality is that for December 1984, which is devoted to political practice during the French Revolution; it has as its main article a piece by Mona Ozouf on the revolutionary discourse. The majority of the contributors are, as usual, American; the atmosphere tends to be dominated by Europe as seen through discerning and knowledgeable American eyes. The September 1985 number contains several pieces that are of typical interest. There is an unusual article by Michael Curtin on the study of manners, in which he discusses both courtesy and etiquette books, with particular reference to women. He suggests that the Victorian etiquette book provided "ladies" with a means of achieving recognition and organizing their ambitions. Then, in addition to contributions on urbanization in Russia and on the development of West Germany since 1945, there are two important review articles. The one considers recent work on Martin Luther. It is a long and detailed study by Jean Wirth of the University of Strasbourg. The other, by Michael Ermarth, surveys aspects of modern European intellectual history, with particular reference to post-structuralism and to the work of Foucault and Derrida. It defines intellectual historians as being particularly sensitive barometers of change within the profession; and it could be said that this journal constantly keeps its readers aware of the developments which are taking place in modern history.

Douglas Johnson

Journal of African History
Volume 26, No 4
£17 per volume (3 parts). Cambridge University Press, The Edinburgh Building, Shaftesbury Road, Cambridge CB2 2RU.

The *Journal of African History*, founded in 1960, was the first, and is still the leading, journal in its field. The range of its contributors, like its editorial board, has always been international; in 1985 it carried articles from Canada, Nigeria, Belgium and Botswana, as well as the United Kingdom and the United States. It accepts contributions in English or French, though this number of the latter, never very large, has diminished since *Cahiers d'Études Africaines* began to take more interest in history.

The scholarly interests of the four editors embrace the whole of Africa and all periods of its history. Surveys of recent archaeological research and datings from different regions are regularly carried, and there are many studies

which use oral traditions or early Arabic sources. Recently, however, articles dealing with experiences of particular African communities during the colonial period, based on extensive archival research and usually avoiding polemics, have been most numerous. The book reviews are invaluable. Reviewers are carefully chosen and widely distributed; their work is almost invariably thorough and thoughtful, and sometimes genuinely creative.

Following recent reductions in the resources available for African historical research, the editors have begun to find difficulty in filling quarterly issues with work that satisfies their very high standards. Sometimes they have published special issues arising from international conferences, or other academic events. Volume 26, No 4, consists largely of papers on Africa and the Second World War, originally presented to a conference at the School of Oriental and African Studies in May, 1984; it is of impressive range and interest.

John D. Hargreaves

Theology

Theology
Volume LXXXVIII, January, March, May, July, September and November 1985; Nos 721-6
£10.80 a year for six issues. SPCK, Holy Trinity Church, Marylebone Road, London NW1 4DU.

Pleasingly produced inside a pillar-box-red cover, *Theology* is the liveliest of the journals in its field in Britain; and there is a fitness in its being predominantly Anglican, since theologically the country's liveliest denomination is the elastic-sided Church of England. The editors are C of E clerics: Peter Coleman, Bishop of Crediton, who superintends the articles and letters; Leslie Houlden, lecturer in New Testament studies at King's College, London, who runs the reviews (which occupy almost half of each issue); and John Drury, Dean of King's College, Cambridge, the consultant member of the triumvirate. Most contributors, like most of the 5,000 customers, are Anglican divines.

The level of conventional faith assumed is low. In the issue of March 1985, Dennis Nineham recurs to R. H. Lightfoot's dictum of fifty years ago that the Gospels disclose only the outskirts of Jesus' ways. Nineham finds it established "in the eyes of most competent judges," and foresees disastrous results from the chronic disjunction between sound scholarship and current religious teaching. Radicals of varying depth, like Maurice Wiles and Don Cupitt, are to be found throughout the year as reviewers. But the general tone is not so sceptical as to have held back the Archbishop of Canterbury from contributing to the July number a sermon on the twentieth anniversary of T. S. Eliot's death (and quoting with approval, "Teach us to sit still").

The journal keeps a certain journalistic edge. In the September 1985 number, published when the Church of England was electing a new General Synod which would have to decide whether to make priests of women, the two leading pieces bear on that question. Daphne Hampson suggests that feminists, finding Christianity tied to symbols which make God male, have to move beyond it to "a non-anthropomorphic understanding of God." John Austin Baker, Bishop of Salisbury, argues that in true Catholic theology Christ is present at the Eucharist not so much in the eucharistic minister as in the elements, consecrated by a trinitarian God; and that the ordination of women to the Church of England priesthood would be positively helpful in making that clear.

In the November number, Norman Pittenger takes the "process" theologian's line that "the event of Jesus Christ" was not unique, but only "the classical instance" of God's continuing activity in human life: many non-Christian movements also help in the divine process of bringing deliverance to humankind through love. He brings the journal back to its central business of unassertive God-talk.

John Whale

Subscription rates given are for individuals; rates may vary for students, libraries etc.

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In *Stow Church Restored, 1846-1866* (220pp. Woodbridge: Boydell Press, for the Lincoln Record Society. £19.50. 0 901053 39 8) Mark Spurrell has gathered the frequently heated correspondence surrounding the restoration of one of the most important of all surviving Anglo-Saxon churches. The work was carried out under the supervision of John Loughborough Pearson.